

Scholars and literati of the Ming and Qing used to come here to drink wine and compose poems.

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"Sometimes deep in the night, I think about our plays and wonder how many we have left."

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"I look for distinctive work, saying something about what's going on in China."

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By Su Wei

For Xue Qingshui, a doctoral student at Shanghai's Jiaotong University, switching supervisors after over one year was a major disruption to his doctoral studies. "But we still insisted on making the move," Xue told *Beijing Today* last Friday.

Last July, Xue and another eight doctoral students went to the unusual lengths of transferring to new supervisors. Till now, their former supervisor Wang Yongcheng, professor of the university's Information College has not filled in the supervisor transfer application form, as requested by the university.

"Now under the guidance of new supervisors, we are able to concentrate on academic study," said Su Guiyang, another of the nine students.

A Xinhua report on March 29 said that the issue was not simply a one-off conflict between students and teacher, but "highlighted the problems of the system of educating doctoral students in China."

How many is too many?

According to the Xinhua report, one reason the nine students changed their supervisor was that being responsible for around 40 students, Wang was unable to give them individual academic guidance.

Li Hong (a pseudonym), who completed her doctorate in Arts at a renowned university in Beijing last year, recalls that in 1999, she, along with more than 100 students enrolled in the graduate college, 70 more than scheduled. "In my university the income of supervisors of doctoral students is largely dependent on the number of students he or she has," she said.

Wang Yongcheng says the number of students a supervisor has depends both on the area of research he is involved in as well as the ability of the supervisor. "Supervisors of doctoral students should have strategic knowledge, that is, the ability to provide guidance at a macro level rather than detailed guidance," he told *Beijing Today* Monday.

Zhang Wenxian, professor at Fudan University's Management College and founder of the Shanghai Enterprise Efficiency Institute agrees that it should not be assumed that there is always a negative relationship between quality and quantity. "I have more than ten doctoral students but I ask them to not only learn from me but also from other students, through discussing ideas and exchanging opinions."

But Lu Guosun, president of the university's Foreign Languages Department, strongly opposes supervisors having many doctoral students, arguing that quantity is being overvalued at the expense of quality. "Under current conditions in China, quality is being ignored," he said. "It seems that the

Quantity

Threatening

Quality

Are doctoral supervisors in China spreading their talents too thinly?

'Without income, how can they publish their articles? Without projects how can they get the money?'

academic standard of a doctoral supervisor is judged by the number of students he or she has." Lu says with only two doctoral students, his ranking in the university is not as high as some of his colleagues with more students.

Zhu Shida, a research fellow of the Institute of American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, believes doctoral supervisors should limit the number of candidates he accepts. "It is hard to imagine how a supervisor could have the energy and time to take care of seven or more," he said. "The qualification to be a doctoral supervisor should be granted through a more careful process of selection. The best minds in all endeavors of the sciences should be the supervisors who will train the next generation of China's best minds."

Academia vs commerce

The Xinhua report says the nine students formerly worked at National High-tech Application, a company registered in the name of Wang's wife, Chen Zushen, and

based in Wang's office. "Wang had not given us any academic guidance, except asking us to carry out projects he obtained either as state research projects or enterprise new product development," an unnamed student was quoted as saying in the report.

"Doctoral students, especially those in science and engineering, frequently call their supervisors 'boss,'" a student at a research institute in Beijing, told *Beijing Today*, requesting anonymity. "It is because supervisors are more like heads of construction teams, always with projects they are asking us to undertake."

He said during his four years' doctoral study, his supervisor has never held any academic discussion with him. "The only discussions that we have are directly focused on the projects that he has asked me to work on," he said. "I am not a young man and I have already accumulated some experience. The reason for me to study for a doctoral degree is to gain more academic knowledge. But instead of learning, I only work and work."

Huang Fei (a pseudonym), a doctoral student at a renowned university, says he does not oppose working on projects for his supervisor, so long as the project has research value. "In fact for all the projects that a supervisor might have, no matter whether they are government sponsored or commercial, they are only projects. So it becomes a routine for us to carry out a project, complete it and then begin a similar one," he said.

Huang adds that what their supervisors care about is whether

these projects could be finished on time, allowing them to be paid for the completed project and publish papers about them.

Ye Jianhua, a professor of East China Normal University, says there are two types of projects assigned to doctoral students by their supervisors - those that the supervisors obtain from national projects funded by the government and those that come from enterprises. He points out that the former are an important means of improving students' research abilities, while the latter is helpful in strengthening their abilities to combine theory with practice.

In light of his own experience, Zhang Wenxian considers there is nothing untoward about his over 10 doctorate students working in his institute on enterprise-targeted projects. "For the students, it is to their advantage to undertake these projects," he said.

While these projects can bring in 200,000 to 300,000 yuan, they are "all consistent with the areas we are studying academically," he added.

"Since society demands the combining of theoretical knowledge with practice, there is no reason for us to ignore the knowledge application. Otherwise knowledge from books will only remain in books," he said. "Knowledge by itself cannot be turned into productivity, unless it is put into practice."

(Continued on page 2)

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Foreign Trade Law Amendments Approved

The draft amendment to the Chinese Foreign Trade Law, submitted for deliberation for the third time, was passed by a unanimous vote at the eighth meeting of the 10th National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, which closed on Tuesday.

The passage of the revised Foreign Trade Law, which will take effect on July 1, concluded China's two-year-long review of its laws related to foreign trade, bringing China's legal system into line with its WTO commitments.

Previously, China had enacted and revised 12 laws related to foreign trade under its WTO commitments, such as joint venture law, foreign enterprise law and customs law.

Huang Jianchu, chief of the economic law section under the Com-

mission of the Legislative Affairs of the NPC Standing Committee said the legislative work directly related to China's WTO commitment has concluded, and that review of relevant administrative regulations will be the focus for related departments in future.

The revised Foreign Trade Law has three major changes: individuals can also be operators of foreign trade; legally registered foreign trade operators can conduct both goods and technology import and export without the need to obtain administrative approval; foreign trade rights of some special products, such as petroleum, grain, chemical fertilizer, cotton, sugar and edible oil, which were completely reserved for state-owned companies in the past, should be publicly autho-

rizied and a certain ratio of these products may be imported and exported by non-authorized companies.

The revised Foreign Trade Law also added clauses concerning how to maintain fair trade order and how to exert trade relief, so that the domestic foreign trade enterprises could utilize anti-subsidy and anti-dumping means under the WTO framework to safeguard their own interests in international trade affairs.

In order to respond promptly to sudden changes in foreign trade and provide better service to the operators, the revised law also adds clauses for establishing an early warning system, a public information service system, a statistics mechanism and publicity about illegal operations.

The revised laws also broaden the range of sanctions against illegal operations, currently limited to the withdrawal of operation credit through adopting more severe punishments, from criminal penalties to administrative penalties and cancellation of operators' qualifications.

The revised law also has clauses on protecting intellectual property rights in trade, which is common in many countries' business law, aiming to protect the rights of both domestic and foreign property owners.

The clause on responses to administrative punishment, which regulates that a trader can ask for reconsideration of an unfavorable ruling or take legal proceedings, came from the suggestion of commerce chambers of foreign-funded trade enterprises.

He stressed that the revised Foreign Trade Law is relatively complete and feasible, but the effective implementation of the law cannot be achieved without the amendments of the related administrative regulations, which are still under consideration.

(Xinhua)

Reforms Target Publishing Industry

By Chu Meng / Hou Mingxin

The transformation of China publication group into China Publication Corporation has been approved by the state council, which indicates that the central government has ordered structural reform for state-level publishing houses, Xinhua reported on Sunday.

This newly launched conglomerate has twelve core members, including the People's Literature Publishing House, the Commercial Press, Xinhua Bookstore, and China National Publishing Import and Export Corporation. It has transformed from a state-owned publication group into a joint-stock economic entity with a capitalized operating model.

According to the report, the aim of the shake-up is to introduce a modern corporate system with clearly established ownership, well-defined powers and responsibility and

scientific management. It also calls for an expansion of reforms in China's press and publication industries.

The report further states that almost all of China's publishing units will be transformed into enterprises. The People's Publishing House, the only exception to the makeover order, will maintain its organization and identity as a public service operation.

This year, China Publication Corporation will establish a chain-store operation system and retailing networks, enhance distribution capability, expand import and export trade volume and market share. It will also constitute a multi-lateral capital corporation and expand the scope of stock market financing in an effort to become the mainstream force in China's press and publication industry, according to Yang.

At present there are 527 publishing houses nationwide. In 2002 alone they published 171,000 titles, printing a total of 6.9 billion volumes. Although some publishers have modernized their operations during the past few years, traditional planned economy mechanisms have remained largely in place in this industry.

Under China's WTO agreements, the book retail market will open to foreign companies from December 1. Investment stakes will no longer be restricted to below set levels, and investors will be free to manage operations as they see fit. At the same time, hurdles for private domestic companies will fall.

Electronic Signature Law Under Discussion

By Yi Yi

The draft law on electronic signatures, first put up for discussion at the 10th National People's Congress Standing Committee meeting, which concluded Monday, is listed as one of the NPC's priorities this year.

The law was initially proposed by NPC representative Lin Qiang, from Fujian, in early March. On March 24, the State Council approved the draft in principal.

With 5 chapters and 37 articles, the draft is based on comments from e-commerce and law experts, and draws on relevant laws from the UN, EU, and the US, Japan, Korea and Singapore. Cao Kangtai, director of the Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council, explained to the meeting that the draft focuses on four aspects; the establishment of the legal force of electronic signatures, regu-

lation of the use of electronic signatures, confirmation of the legal status and process of authenticating institutions, and regulations pertaining to safeguard measures.

The draft states that an electronic signature has legal force equal to that of a handwritten signature. It also establishes the establishment criteria for electronic authenticators.

Wang Juntao, founder of the pioneering E-commerce companies 8848 and 6688, asked customers, enterprises and individuals to provide comments on the websites, and then asked them to confirm the information via regular mail. This brought the E-commerce company unnecessary cost, which was passed onto buyers and sellers. "We still sign contracts through regular mail. If digital signatures obtain legal force, then everything can be handled on the website, which would eventually save considerable time and cost," commented Wang.

There are over 4,000 E-commerce website and over 70 authenticating organizations in China according to statistics from the China Internet Network Information Center, and the total E-commerce sales volume in China had reached \$60 billion dollars by 2003.

The reason for the issue of the regulation, according to the commission, is the huge risks hidden in unfair affiliated transactions between commercial banks and their affiliated parties, which seriously undermine the safe and stable functioning of commercial banks.

By the end of 2003, non-performing loans accounted for 17.8 percent of total lending by major Chinese financial institutions, or the State-owned commercial banks, policy banks and joint-stock commercial banks.

The new regulation give a detailed definition of "affiliated transactions" and list the different types of transactions. Affiliated parties typically include shareholders and senior bank management.

According to the new regulation, commercial banks are explicitly forbidden to extend unsecured loans to affiliated parties, grant loans collateralized by shares from the lender itself, or provide guarantees for financing activities by affiliated parties.

New Highlights for Expo

By Su Wei

The Seventh China Beijing International High-tech Exposition, featuring nearly 100 activities covering more than 40 topics, will be held from May 21 to 26. The news was announced by Yang Liuyin, executive vice secretary-general of the Expo Organizing Committee at a press conference Thursday.

Compared with the past Expos, coordination of social and economic development is being promoted as a highlight this year. The China Summit on City Management and Development will be a prominent new addition to this year's event, with topics such as strategy and positioning of cities, planning and information construction of city management, integration and

value-added urban resources and intelligent transportation and logistics.

"It is also the first time for a forum on cooperation and development in the Bohai economic area is to be held," said Lu Hao, secretary-general of the committee. "We hope it will work as a platform for scholars, government officials and entrepreneurs to meet and discuss the region's development and promote its economy."

As in the past two Expos, financing, new technology application and tendering of the building materials for Olympic venue construction projects, will also be carried out. According to the committee, the core competitiveness of enterprises and the cultivation of financial and capital markets are also key areas for this year's Expo.

Public Security Review

Beijing's 110 emergency hotline received 12 percent fewer calls this week than in the preceding week, and 175 criminal suspects have been apprehended after investigations. Reports of swindles saw a relative decrease of 35 percent.

Break-ins mostly occurred at Niujiie and Dashilan in Xuanwu, Zhanlanlu in Xicheng, Dongzhimen in Dongcheng, and Chaowai in Chaoyang at night. Jinsong and Panjiayuan in Chaoyang, Qinghe in Haidian and Guangwai in Xuanwu were the most common places for

auto thefts to take place, mainly at night and in the early morning, while street robberies occurred most frequently at Beijing Railway Station and around the outskirts of Chaoyang and Haidian districts.

Robberies targeting materials at construction sites have become a key target of police recently. Criminals operating in groups frequently commit such crimes using trucks to break into construction sites in the early hours of the morning.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

Peking University Seeks Wider Pool of Talent

By Chu Meng

Peking University has announced plans to employ 95 career professors, as part of the reforms to its personnel system. Zhou Yueming, head of the university's personnel department verified the announcement in a report in Thursday's *China Youth Daily*.

The scope of the employment plan involves positions in most colleges and schools at the university, including

twelve professor positions in the physics department and eleven in the information technology department, eight in the mathematics department and six in the chemistry department.

The move represents a significant change in Peking University's employment system, with the employment of large numbers of career professors from outside the university for the first time.

System Set to Control Unemployment

By Hou Mingxin

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security announced at a press conference Tuesday that it will set up a system to regulate and control unemployment in the next two to three years.

In order to avoid surges in unemployment, the ministry will concentrate on exploring possible methods for the regulation and control of unemployment.

The registered unemployed rate reached 4.3 percent by the end of 2003, and the country has set a goal to keep it within 4.4 percent this year.

"With the goal to control unemployment, we will regulate the unemployment situ-

ation through legal, economic and administrative means," said deputy minister Zhang Xiaojian.

Through unemployment regulation, China aims to control excessive unemployment, shorten the cycle of unemployment, avoid periodic over-concentration of laid-off workers and ensure the jobless could sustain a living.

Official statistics showed that 103.73 million people have been covered by unemployment insurance by the end of 2003, 24 million more than in 1998. And 4.5 million laid-off workers currently claim unemployment compensation, seven times more than in 1998.

Forestry Development Speeds Up

By Zhang Bo

The Beijing Municipal Government promulgated a resolution to accelerate forestry development on March 25, according to Beijing Forestry Bureau.

Under the resolution, the government will loosen control on the development of forestry funded by the non-public sector. Capable farmers, urban residents, private entrepreneurs, foreign investors and civil servants are permitted to take part in forestry-related construction and development.

The government will also encourage the turnover of property rights by means of lease, transfer, auction, negotiation and allotment, and legally obtained use rights of afforested land.

The resolution defines two

categories of forestry projects: public interest and commercial. Different management systems and policies have been put forward aimed at each category.

Individuals are encouraged to participate in the construction of public interest forestry projects, which will be funded mainly by the government. However, market mechanisms will play a major role in the development of commercial forestry, which will receive necessary support from the government.

Song Xiyou, director of the Beijing Forestry Bureau, revealed Beijing's area of afforested land would be increased by 35,000 hectares this year, with per capita public green areas increasing by 1 square meter to 45 square meters.

(Continued from page 1)

However, Zhang points out that it is important to let the doctorate students know the positive effects of practicing their knowledge and making decisions as to whether to conduct research or not. "That is, the relationship between supervisors and their doctoral students should be as that between fathers and sons, rather than bosses and employees," he said.

Lu Guosun, on the other hand, insists the idea that academia should be combined with industry is wrong. "Academic pursuit must be purely academic, that is, people engaging in academic study must be devoted to it," he said. "Conducting projects has become too much influenced by commerce. As a result, research projects carried out by different doctoral supervisors in different universities are no different, in spite of different 'packaging.'"

A matter of money

The president of a graduate college of a renowned university, who requested anonymity, told *Beijing Today*, "The investment for a national science project totals 1 million yuan over four years. But the project is usually undertaken by three or four universities with around five supervisors, each usually with two students," he explained. "For an ordinary national project, the investment is usually 200,000 yuan for three years. In fact, those with state projects are much luckier than the nearly 70 percent of doctoral supervisors who have no national projects.

Wang Yongcheng told Xinhua about the difficulty of finding projects in order to obtain money to fund further projects. "For one of my projects, one third of the total 300,000 yuan funding was not allocated by the government till three years later," he said.

Wang says the monthly allowance for a doctoral student in his university is 290 yuan. "But when they come to publish their articles, they need to pay more than 100 yuan per page for the designing, resulting in total fee that can reach as high as several thousand yuan for a complete article," he said. "Without income, how can they publish their articles? Without projects, how can they get the money?"

Mei Renyi, a professor at Beijing University of International Studies and doctoral supervisor in the study of Sino-American relations, told *Beijing Today* that the government has not allocated him any money for an individual project he and his student are working on. "Every year the government allocates 1,000 yuan as the fee to educate a doctoral student, of that, 300 yuan goes to the supervisor and 700 yuan to the students. This amount can hardly cover the expense of buying books, so how can a supervisor concentrate on academic research?"

Self discipline

According to Wang Yajie, deputy director general of the Office of the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council, China has achieved tremendous successes in its post-graduate education in the last two decades. "But I cannot say that there are not any problems," he said. "However these problems can be solved through self-discipline on the part of the supervisors. That is, the supervisors must understand their responsibility is to educate qualified doctoral candidates through both academic and mental guidance."

He says there should be nothing wrong with doctoral supervisors having many students, as long as they have the ability to guide their students to write theses that can withstand rigorous academic challenges. "Under certain circumstances, the students can learn from others who also study with the same supervisor, and then develop their team-spirit," he added.

Wang says that finding means to obtain funds to carry out projects is another responsibility that supervisors should undertake. "It is because the possibility of securing funded projects depends largely on the reputation of the supervisors, and once completed, these projects bring credit not only to the supervisors and their students, but also to the country. However the application of these projects in society is limited to a specific area. For the enterprise-targeted ones, they can have tangible benefits, which cannot be ignored," he said.

"But all the supervisors must bear in mind that self-discipline is the starting point for them to do anything, and a basic requirement to be a supervisor," Wang emphasized.

More Metal Demand in China

By Sun Yongjian

China has an insatiable appetite for metal, according to an analysis report put together by JP Morgan and issued Friday.

That report, focusing on metal consumption in seven developed and emerging markets, named China as the world's largest market for basic metals, specifically bronze, stainless steel, iron and steel, and demand is expected to double in the next five or six years.

Metal consumption in China is developing so quickly that it could result in a rise in global metal prices. The report said China is the world's top consumer of bronze, stainless steel, iron and steel.

Chinese consumers' rising incomes and concur-

rent ability to purchase metal-heavy products such as homes, cars and electrical equipment are major factors behind the boom in demand. The report attributed part of the rise in domestic purchasing power to the development of the national credit system. Credit consumption has fueled explosive growth in the real estate sector, in turn spiking demand for metal-based construction supplies and home products such as electrical equipment and air conditioning systems.

Domestic production cannot keep up with demand, for example China only produces 25 percent of the stainless steel it consumes, making the exporting of metals to this country lucrative business for Asian neighbors.



Reams of stainless steel in a US warehouse await export to China, the world's top basic metal consumer. AFP Photo

Sinopec Report Points to Big Growth in 2003

By Yi Yi

Last year was a good one for China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation (Sinopec), according to the company's financial results for the twelve months ending December 31, 2003 released on Monday.

In the report, Sinopec posted revenues of 443.14 billion yuan (\$53.54 billion) in 2003, a 28.39 percent increase from the year before, and operating profits of 37.27 billion yuan, representing a 29.95 percent rise.

Sinopec's 2003 turnover figures make it the largest listed company in China. At a press briefing in Hong Kong last Wednesday, Sinopec chairman and president Chen Tonghai said, "All segments continued to post encouraging growth.... As a result, the

company's efforts have been acknowledged by the capital market, leading to greater returns to shareholders and an elevation of its valuation."

In addition, Sinopec has established contracts for oil and gas projects in Saudi Arabia, Gabon, Kazakhstan, Yemen and Ecuador.

He added that at least one of Sinopec Group's profitable overseas joint venture projects would be put under the listed company's umbrella this year. The intention, said the president, is to issue more shares in the future as a means of reducing the state's stake in the company.

Chen said that after comprehensive profitability evaluations were conducted, all five of the above mentioned projects would be transferred to the listed company in the future.

Domestic Airlines Urged to Compensate Delayed Passengers

By Xiao Yingying

A high-level interview on Monday sparked a rash of reports in the domestic media that national authorities were drafting regulations to effectively force Chinese airlines to compensate passengers for delayed or cancelled flights.

Li Jiangmin, director of CAAC's transportation division, was quoted by *Beijing Youth Daily* Monday as saying that, according to "international practices," for flight delays of four hours, food and lodging must be provided, for delays of five hours, ticket prices should be

cut 50 percent, and full refunds should be offered in cases of delays of 10 hours or more.

However, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) issued a statement denying the existence of such "international practices."

CAAC explains that flight delays and cancellations are complicated and involved a variety of factors, such as airlines' service capacities and weather.

"Therefore, there is no way to set across-the-board compensation standards," said an administration spokesman.



Seven-Eleven entered the China market through Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, in 2002.

Photo by Photocom

Slew of S'levens Coming to Capital

By Zhao Hongyi

This city's first Seven-Eleven convenience store is slated to open near Dongzhimen on April 15, the company's Beijing office announced Tuesday.

The shop is being opened with a total of \$35 million in investment by a joint venture established by Seven-Eleven Japan, a

licensee of 7-Eleven, Inc., Beijing Shoulian Commercial Group and China National Sugar and Alcohol Group.

Seven-Eleven Japan received government approval to open outlets in China at the end of last year.

The joint venture has publicized ambitious plans to open 30

to 50 stores in Beijing this year, the first five of which should be in business by the end of May. Most of the goods for sale in the stores will be locally purchased.

US-based 7-Eleven has already established a presence in southern China's Guangdong Province via a joint venture with Dairy Farm of Hong Kong.

Appliance Giant Enters Risky AV Market

By Shan Jinliang

China's largest home appliances chain, Beijing-based Gome, established Gome Audio Video with its mother company, China Eagle Investment Corp, on Tuesday, marking its first foray into the nation's audio and video (AV) industry.

Gome Audio Video General Manager Li Juntao announced at Tuesday's press conference that the company would invest 500 million yuan to open 5,000 outlets in China in the coming five years. The first branches, located inside Gome home appliance stores, will start operating before May 1.

Later, China Eagle Investment acting vice president Zhang Zhiming said the company hoped to repeat Gome's resounding success. Starting from a single small store in Beijing in 1987, Gome has expanded into



Gome's first AV stores will open inside some of its 125 appliance outlets nationwide. Photo by Photocom

the third-largest chain company in China, its 125 outlets in 25 large cities earning a total sales volume of 17.8 billion yuan in 2003.

A serious problem facing Gome Audio Visual and other legitimate AV retailers is the dominance of cheap, pirated products in the domestic market. Sales of genuine

products account for less than one-third of the 30-billion-yuan national market. Zhu He, deputy general secretary of the China AV Association, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday, "The road to success will be a difficult one for Gome, even though Gome Audio Video will set prices 20 to 30 percent lower than competitors thanks to mass purchasing."

Gome Audio Video on Tuesday also signed a declaration to promote genuine products. Milind Yedkar, CEO of Shanghai CAV Thakral Home Entertainment Company, one of the new company's partners, told *Beijing Today* he was ready to sign a contract with Gome Audio Video soon, adding, "Gome Audio Video will follow the business model of Wal-Mart to success, meaning our cooperation will be a win-win situation."

Foreign Pharm Firm to Sell Domestic Venture

By Xiao Yingying

GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals (China) Investment Co. confirmed plans to sell one of its oldest Chinese joint ventures to Chongqing-based Taiji Group, according to a report in Guangzhou's *Nanfang Daily* last Sunday.

The paper reported GSK had stipulated that no employees be laid off within two years of the transition, in return for which it would leave in place all the joint venture's aerosol manufacturing lines and technologies, long sought after by domestic pharmaceutical firms.

GSK Pharmaceuticals (Chongqing) was the first of GSK's five joint ventures in China. The com-

pany was founded in December 1988 with investment from then GlaxoWellcome, China National Pharmaceutical Foreign Trade Corporation and Southwest Pharma. GSK increased its share to nearly 90 percent in the following years.

Buyer Taiji is one of China's top traditional pharmaceutical firms. It operates three listed companies and achieved a total sales volume of over 6 billion yuan in 2003.

GSK China public relations department manager Xiao Weiqun explained that the decision to sell was made in order to uphold the Montreal Protocol, which calls for the end of use of freon, an important catalyst in the production of aerosol propel-

lants, to protect the ozone layer.

Market analysts, however, have speculated that GSK's real motivation was to cut its operating losses in China caused by over investment and redundant production capacity.

The past few years, GSK Group, formed by the merger of GlaxoWellcome and SmithKlineBeecham in December 2000, has been investing and expanding around the world, with China no exception.

GSK has invested over \$230 million in China and established one investment company as well as one wholly-owned and five jointly-owned production ventures in this country.

China Life Group Faces the Music

By Sun Yongjian

China Life Insurance Group announced in Beijing on Wednesday that it would absorb fines slapped on subsidiary China Life Insurance Shareholding after that company was found to have committed fraud before it listed in Hong Kong last December.

On Thursday, China Life Shareholding issued its own statement that China Life Group would cover its outstanding debts and fines of 11.09 million yuan, totaling 67.49 million yuan, as stipulated by the National Audit Office on March 30.

Beijing Today reported on March 26 that an individual American investor had filed a suit against China Life Shareholding, now listed in Hong Kong and the US, over allegations of up to \$652 million in irregularities in its bookkeeping. The company later claimed innocence on the grounds that its books had been cooked by its parent company in order to facilitate its listing.

Investigations conducted by the National Audit Office confirmed that there were approximately 5.4 billion yuan of improper funds in China Life Group's coffers, according to reports published in January.

Trust Products Could Handle Bad Loans

By Sun Yongjian

Trust products are being explored as means of bringing average investors into the process of tackling domestic banks' non-performing loans, Yao Haixing, general manager of CITIC Trust & Investment Co. said on Monday in Beijing at the 2004 Assets Securitization Forum.

Yao called trust transactions better choices for solving the thorny problem of banks' bad loans than traditional methods such as packaged sales or auctions. She continued that trust products could increase the liquidity of non-performing loans while also protecting investors' interests.

According to Yao, CITIC Trust & Investment Co. will cooperate with China Huarong Assets Management Corp in this project.

Dow Jones Adjusts China Indexes

By Dong Nan

Dow Jones announced the latest results of its regular quarterly review of the Dow Jones China Indexes on March 31.

Six components were deleted and six added to the Dow-China 88, which tracks the 88 largest and most liquid stocks in China's Class-A market and reflects roughly 31.71 percent of the free-float market capitalization of both the Shanghai and Shenzhen markets.

The components of the Dow-China Total Market increased to 1,033 from 985, with 970 A-shares and 63 B-shares on April 1.

The Dow-China Indexes were launched May 27, 1996 and have since been subject to regular quarterly reviews. The latest adjustment took effect on April 1.

JP Morgan Purchases Assets from Huarong

By Su Wei

JP Morgan Chase & Co. announced Monday that it purchased two groups of non-performing assets from Huarong, one of the China's four state asset management companies.

Last year, JP Morgan successfully rolled out renminbi banking services and obtained Qualified Foreign Institutional Investor (QFII) status in China. Earlier this year, the company received approval to set up an assets management company in Shanghai in partnership with Shanghai International Trust and Investment Corp.

Local Firewater Headed Overseas

By Zhao Hongyi

Six hundred bottles of top end *erguotou*, one of the most famed varieties of *baijiu*, high-proof Chinese white spirit, were shipped to Los Angeles this week, according to a report in the Associated Press last Friday.

The exported liquor was produced and shipped by Beijing-based distiller Red Star Holding Co.

Erguotou, usually distilled from sorghum, is famed for its strong, spicy taste and high alcohol content, above that of vodka and whiskey.

However, those same qualities have spelled trouble for the liquor overseas, where a taste for erguotou has not really

been acquired outside of Chinese communities. The recently-exported liquor was made according to a new secret recipe jointly developed by Red Star and the US-based importer in order to more closely target American palates.

Last December, Red Star exported a test shipment to the same importer, the name of which was not disclosed.

When *Beijing Today* contacted Red Star for comment, an employee in the president's office who would not give his name was resolutely tight-lipped, saying, "We are preparing for our public listing and have been notified by management not to answer any media inquiries."

News Corp Quits Australia for US



AFP Photo

Sydney, April 6 (Reuters) - Rupert Murdoch made the final break from his Australian roots on Tuesday with plans to shift the corporate headquarters of News Corp. Ltd., one of the world's top four media empires, to New York.

Murdoch, who has US citizenship and has lived in America since the 1970s, said News Corp. would move its primary share listing to the New York Stock Exchange to attract more institutional investors and boost access to US capital markets.

The move is also widely seen as a path for News Corp. to be inducted in a year into the Standard & Poor's 500, a benchmark index for US companies, analysts said.

"The main thrust of the decision is to widen the investor base," said David Joyce, a media analyst at Guzman & Co. Some

large mutual and pension fund money managers are restricted from buying stakes in foreign-issued stocks, he noted.

News Corp., which includes 20th Century Fox film studios, the Fox News Channel, scores of newspapers and a swath of pay-TV businesses from BSkyB to DirecTV, makes more than 75 percent of its profits in the US.

The company has been managed on an operational basis from New York for years, but analysts said the group opted to maintain its main listing in Australia to avoid capital gains charges on acquisitions.

News Corp. said none of its businesses, and few of its shareholders, would be hit with a tax bill as a result of the move. It will maintain secondary listings in London and Australia, where it currently makes up about 7 percent of the bench-

mark S&P/ASX200 index.

"It's something that has been discussed for some time. I think it's a positive," said Tony Wilson, media analyst at UBS, who noted that News Corp. trades at about a 10 percent discount to its US peers.

The Murdoch family holds 14 percent equity and 30 percent of voting shares, worth A\$8.8 billion (US\$6.74 billion), in News Corp.

(Sophie Hares)

Analyst's Take:

News Corp. holds a one-third stake in the Hong Kong-based Phoenix TV and wholly owns the newly opened Star TV in China. It is discussing entering the digital channel in Shanghai.

Through its Fox TV network, News Corp. transmits China Central Television's English programs, CCTV9, to parts of the US.

News Corp. also owns a 12 percent stake, worth US\$60 million, in China Netcom's broad band business, and jointly owns "http://www.chinabyte.com" with People's Daily and has invested in "http://www.netease.com".

In December 2002, News Corp. set up a strategic alliance with Hunan Radio, Film & TV Group, the official branch of China's media administration in the province, for program production, worldwide distribution and program exchanges.

Though the two parties have not made any great progress in this regard, the alliance enables News Corp. to take a leading position in China against other media giants like Viacom, AOL Time Warner and Walt Disney.

— Tang Runhua, senior researcher, Institute of News Studies, Xinhua News Agency

Ukrainians Expelled for Soros Protest

Kiev, Ukraine, April 2 (AP) - Two students were expelled from a Kiev university after they threw mayonnaise at billionaire philanthropist George Soros while he was visiting Ukraine, a colleague said.

Kiev Polytechnic University students Dmytro Khmara and Atila Selei-Dovzhenko of the nationalist group Bratstvo were expelled on Thursday, another group member, Oles Yanchuk, told the Associated Press.

The pair had claimed responsibility for throwing what Bratstvo said was mayonnaise at Soros at the start of a human rights conference on Wednesday.

Yanchuk called their expulsion an "act of political pressure." He said other students might stage protests demanding their reinstatement.

The Hungarian-born Soros is the founder of the Open Society Institute (OSI), which promotes democracy in the countries of the former Soviet Union and elsewhere.

Critics say the institute played a role in last year's ouster of Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze, who resigned amid mass public protests.

Bratstvo, whose name means 'brotherhood,' claimed Soros' visit was actually aimed at conducting talks with the Ukrainian opposition to fund a similar scenario in Ukraine. Soros dismissed such allegations as "far from reality."

Analyst's Take:

Since being set up in Hungary in 1984, Soros' Open Society Institute has expanded to 31 countries around the world, mostly in Eastern Europe and Russia. The annual budget of the institute is around US\$300 million.

OSI provides support to the opposition parties in the countries.

In December, 1996, former Croatian president Franco Tudjman accused Soros of supporting the country's opposition attempts to overthrow his government. Soros and OSI were also accused of being behind the military coup in Albania in February 1997. Soros is also believed to be a strong supporter of Mikhael Saakashvili, who drove out Georgian president Eduard Shevardnadze and is now the country's president.

This time, Soros came to Ukraine before the presidential election in the country, claiming to teach the Ukrainians "what an open society is."

Soros' interest in politics is based on his personality. The financial tycoon promised to overthrow George W. Bush in this year's election.

Other factors can also explain his political enthusiasm. Soros was born in Hungary. That is why he has the strong desire to build an open and fair society in his home country and the region.

More importantly, Soros knows he can make money in these transitional markets. The best way is to build up close relations with political leaders.

— Yang Li, Institute of International Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Photo by gamesbids.com

'Construction Burst' to Beat Delays

Athens, April 4 (AP) - A top Greek Olympic official promised Saturday to keep working flat out to meet urgent deadlines for the Olympics.

"There is a burst of construction going on," said Fani Palli-Petralia, the deputy culture minister in charge of coordinating Olympic projects.

"If we continue at this pace, everything will be better and we will finish on time."

Petralia visited the main Olympic complex - the scene of several delayed projects - and inspected the newly installed roof of the velodrome.

The IOC says the roof must be ready by the end of June - weeks ahead of its promised July 20 delivery date. The government has promised to meet the new deadline.

Mayor Says Athens Ready for Olympics

Athens, Greece, April 5 (AP) - Athens Mayor Dora Bakoyianni said Monday those planning a trip to the Athens Olympics should not be deterred by fears of a terrorist attack.

Bakoyianni said all necessary steps have been taken to avoid an attack during the games.

She said it was her belief that the Athens Olympics had to send a "moral message" to the rest of the world.

Plans to protect the games are the most expensive in Olympic history, so far costing more than \$800 million. Greece has asked for NATO's help - including the use of some AWACS aircraft - and Athens security measures will involve more than 50,000 police and soldiers.

Athens has also sought international help to safeguard the games and has formed a seven-nation advisory group that includes Australia, Britain, Israel and the United States.

Athens is expecting more than 1.5 million visitors during the Olympics.

(Patrick Quinn)

Media Reports:

Due to the tough budget, the Athens 2004 Olympic Games Organizing Committee has had to cancel a number of con-

struction projects, including the "Green Olympics" project which was intended to increase the amount of trees and grass areas in the city, providing a better venue for the Games.

The organizing committee had a \$2.4 billion budget at the very beginning. But it has to spend a third of that on security. Though the budget has been raised several times, no one knows how much the total cost will be.

— Beijing Evening News, April 5
Many Athenians don't like having the Olympic Games held in their city. They hate the air pollution brought by the construction.

Budget constraints are another problem. Most Greeks are concerned about a financial deficit when the games are over. Many people are under the impression that there will be an economic slump after the games, because all the construction jobs will no longer exist.

Another problem is security. That is what ATHOC is worrying about most at present.

— www.gamesbids.com/lapple

Ikea Founder Not Richest

Stockholm, Sweden, April 5 (AP) - The founder of Swedish furniture giant Ikea isn't hurting for money, but the company he founded denied on Monday a report that he surpassed Bill Gates and Warren Buffett as the world's wealthiest man.

In an article to be released this week, Swedish news weekly *Veckans Affaer* said Ingvar Kamprad, 77, the founder of Ikea, had surpassed Microsoft's Gates and Buffett as the world's wealthiest person.

The falling exchange rate between the Swedish krona and the US dollar, the magazine said, had caused Kamprad's personal fortune to rise to an estimated \$52.5 billion.

Ikea said that wasn't the case.

"This is completely wrong. It's a mistake that is made all the time," said Ikea spokeswoman Marianne Barner. "Estimat-

ing the value of the company, including all the stores, and saying it's all Ingvar's, that is totally wrong."

"Ingvar Kamprad does not own Ikea. Ingvar donated the concern to the Dutch Stichting INGKA Foundation in 1982."

In February, Forbes magazine's annual ranking of the world's billionaires put Gates at No. 1 with an estimated \$46.6 billion. It was the 10th consecutive year the Microsoft co-founder was atop the list.

Buffett, the Omaha investment guru, was No. 2 with \$42.9 billion.

On that same list, Kamprad was No. 13, with an estimated fortune of \$18.5 billion.

But Veckans Affaer said when the dollar's slide against the krona was calculated, he had overtaken Gates and Buffett.

Kamprad has a reputation for being frugal and lives in Switzerland where, as



AFP Photo

a resident, he is not subject to Sweden's taxes, which are among the highest in the world.

Ikea, founded in 1943, has 174 stores in 31 countries and employs some 76,000 workers.

(Tommy Grandell)

IBM Buys Daksh

Bangalore, April 6 (Reuters) - International Business Machines Corp. has signed a deal to acquire Daksh e-services Pvt Ltd, India's third-largest business outsourcing firm, a source in the Indian company said on Wednesday.

Delhi-based Daksh employs more than 6,000 people and offers call center services. It has more than 10 clients, including Internet retailer Amazon.com, and counts Citigroup's venture arm and General Atlantic Partners among its investors.

Bank of America to Cut 12,500 Jobs

Charlotte, North Carolina, April 6 (AP) - Bank of America Corp., now the No. 3 bank in the US, is to cut 12,500 jobs - or nearly 7 percent of its 180,000-employee work force - over the next two years.

Last week, the bank completed its \$47 billion merger with FleetBoston Financial Corp.

Chief executive Ken Lewis said he wants to achieve about \$1.6 billion in cost savings by the end of 2005, partly through trimming overlapping operations.

(Paul Nowell)

Boeing Picks Rolls-Royce, GE

Seattle, April 6 (Reuters) - Boeing Co. on Tuesday named Rolls-Royce Plc and General Electric Co.'s aircraft engines unit to supply engines for its proposed 7E7 jetliner.

That leaves United Technologies Corp.'s Pratt & Whitney division out of the running for what would be the first all-new plane offered by Boeing in a decade.

The deal's value is difficult to quantify, but analysts have estimated the twin-engine 7E7 could bring in \$40 billion to the engine makers including years of airline support and spare parts work, assuming a potential market of 2,000 aircraft.

(Chris Stetkiewicz)

Continental to Eliminate Paper

New York, April 7 (Reuters) - Continental Airlines Inc. said it will eliminate paper tickets by the end of this year in an effort to cut costs, theft and paperwork.

Other airlines said they had mostly, if not entirely, cut out paper tickets.

"We only issue paper tickets if requested by a customer, and with a \$20 charge," said a representative from United Airlines.

American Airlines told Reuters it would also be completely paperless by the end of the year.

Delta Airlines said it had eliminated paper tickets in May 2002, though it will issue paper tickets on request for \$10.

(Jackie Sindrich)

Timeline Set for Breast Implant Deal

Detroit, April 6 (AP) - About 170,000 women who received Dow Corning silicone breast implants could soon receive checks from a \$2.35 billion settlement fund after a judge set a date Friday for the company to emerge from bankruptcy.

Dow Corning was forced into bankruptcy in 1995 after thousands of women sued the company, saying its implants damaged their health. In a settlement approved by a federal judge, Dow Corning agreed to pay women \$2,000 to \$330,000 each.

Dow Corning spokeswoman Mary Lou Benecke said the company is scheduled to emerge from bankruptcy on June 1. The payments could begin on June 15.

(David Runk)

Foreign Brains Join Haidian Think Tank



Sanjoy Das Gupta and Haidian head Zhou Lianglu

By Shan Jinliang

The last slot in a local, four-member think tank was filled last Friday morning by Indian IT expert Sanjoy Das Gupta, invited to join and given a contract by Haidian District head Zhou Lianglu.

Gupta was in town for a 10-day visit that started on April 3. Before his appointment, he made three speeches to officials and representatives of local soft-

ware companies, comparing the software industries of China and India.

"The Haidian government hopes to introduce practices of international software companies operating in India to leading Chinese software companies," Wang Jixiang, deputy director of the Haidian District Science and Technology Committee, was quoted as saying in Saturday's *Beijing Times*.

Sanjoy Das Gupta has

served in the government of the Indian state Karnataka for several years and currently holds the post of international coordinator of ActionAid, an Indian non-profit organization.

The other members of the think tank are financial consultant Godwin Wong from the Haas School of Business of the University of California, Berkeley, Axel Kuhn, professor at Germany's Universitat

Dortmund and Niu Wenyan, counselor to China's State Council and academician at the Third World Academy of Sciences.

Outside of the think tank, the three experts will work separately for the Haidian District Development Planning Committee, the Digital Logistics Port of Zhongguancun Science Park and the Haidian District Science and Technology Committee.

Photographer Attacked at Subway Exit

By Shan Jinliang

Working as a reporter or photojournalist can be a dangerous job in China. Sun Guodong, 23, a photographer for the *China Times*, learned that only too well last Friday when he was assaulted by an unidentified man at the Dawang Qiao subway station.

Police are investigating the case.

Sun is just one in a long string of journalists from TV stations and newspapers such as *Beijing Times*, *Beijing Youth Daily* and Guangdong-based *New Express* attacked in this country in the past few years. Before him, the most recent victims of unprovoked violence were reporters from Beijing Television Station and the newspapers *Big Star* and Yunnan *Xinxibao* assaulted in February.

Last Friday morning, Sun and colleague Yu Chenglong were sent to the station's C exit, the only one that opens on the north side of Jianguomen Waidajie. The B exit, though built in December 2001, has yet to open to traffic, rendering the C exit almost constantly full of commuters.

Sun went back to the station to snap more shots at 1 p.m. He told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday, "There were no traffic assistants around, which created a chance for the event to occur."

Shortly after Sun starting his work, he was approached by a man around 1.8 meters tall who demanded to know what Sun was doing. He screamed, "Cameras are lethal weapons," according to Sun.

The man then charged the young photographer, pushing his head down and trying to force him out of the station. When Sun moved to protect his equipment, the man hit him in the nose and head and Sun fell to the ground.

"My nose began to bleed," Sun said. His assailant fled the scene.

Sun got up and immediately reported the incident to the Jianwai Police Station in Chaoyang District. He was then taken to Chaoyang Hospital, where doctors confirmed his nose had been broken.

"Being a reporter is both exciting and dangerous. This event has not changed my conviction to be a reporter," Sun said.

After staying home to nurse his nose for two days, he went back to work on Monday.



The C exit at Dawang Qiao station, where photographer Sun Guodong was assaulted, is busy and dangerous.



Photo by Cui Jun

Prrr...Local Talent Tries Out for Cats

By Dong Nan

The Beijing production of the musical *Cats*, set to open at the end of the month, will get a bit of local treatment, as 10 lucky fans will be given costumes so they can playfully prowl the aisles of Tianqiao Theater during intermission.

Of the over-500 people who showed up at the theater on Monday to try out for the coveted roles in Andrew Lloyd Webber's famed musical, 24 were chosen to go into the final round of competition by British pro-

ducer The Really Useful Theatre Company.

According to the China Performing Arts Agency, the local actors were judged on their singing, dancing, acrobatics and athletic skills and asked to give improvised, cat-like performances in the try-outs. All of the 24 people selected have received dance or music training, except for one young college student majoring in English. The youngest of the chosen is only 16, but has already studied ballet for five years.

"Though the 'extra cats' do not have the chance to appear on stage, I still think it would be a great chance to learn about musicals, if I am chosen," Beijing Dance College sophomore Huang Wei was quoted as saying in *Beijing Youth Daily*. He added that he had not told his teachers or schoolmates that he had entered the try-outs for fear of disgrace if he was not selected.

According to some judges, it was slim pickings on Monday. "Many people were very skill-

ful, but most of them were too cold," said Zhou Zhiqiang, senior stage manager and a member of the selection panel. "Since their major function is to communicate with the audiences, their passion and vigor are more important than their skills."

On April 14, a list of 20 semi-finalists will be announced. All will undergo one week of strict cat training and then the 10 best will be selected to appear in the local shows, which will run from April 27 to May 3.

Star-Studded Benefit Aids Disabled Orphans

By Su Wei

American Luke Hedden, 12, got a thrill out of sharing dinner with Grammy award-winner Steven Curtis Chapman and several other celebrities last Saturday. The occasion was a charity dinner at the Jing-guang Center hosted by the China Charity Federation and intended to raise money and awareness for disabled orphans in China.

Tennis superstar Michael Chang was among the stars who flew to China to attend the dinner on their own dime. The entrance fees were set at 500 yuan per individual and 10,000 yuan for corporate bookings of 10 people, yet around 400 people, mostly foreigners, willingly forked out the cash to support the cause.

"It is wonderful that so many people would donate their time and money to help orphaned children," said Patty Carpenter, who came to Beijing two years ago from the United States.

Fan Baojun, president of the China Charity Federation, called the dinner a significant event. "With the participation of international friends, many disabled Chinese orphans will not have to suffer any longer, but can begin new lives," he said.

The federation later announced that it took in around 500,000 yuan from the dinner through ticket sales, donations and auctions for select items such as one of Chang's racquets and airplane tickets. All proceeds will go to two charities, Care for Children and the Philip Hayden Foundation. Care for Children is an international charity that works in partnership with national and local Chinese authorities to find homes for orphaned children. The Philip Hayden Foundation is a non-profit organization that gives aid to orphans in China, particularly those with special needs, and provides adoption services.



The 17 bodies in the show are posed to make them look more human and less ghoulish.

Photo by Jia Ting

Return of the Preserved Dead

By Zhou Ying

A gory body of work made its local debut on Wednesday in an exhibition at the Chinese Architectural Culture Center in Xicheng District. The show, entitled *The Body World*, is composed of 17 remarkably intact, preserved human corpses stripped of various levels of skin and muscle to reveal interior workings, as well as displays of 160 real human organs.

The bodies are displayed in various poses of rest and simulated activity to both reveal how the body works and make them appear less ghoulish.

According to the organizers of the show, the bodies are meant to be educational, shining light not only on human anatomy, but also how bad habits can affect

the body, as with a comparison of the lungs of deceased smokers and non-smokers.

Professor Sui Hongjin, the organizer of the exhibition and head of the Biology Plastination Company of Dalian Medical University, explained that the bodies were preserved in a process called "plastination." That consists of soaking the corpse in formaldehyde, freezing it, thawing it and then dissecting it. Fat and water are drained out and replaced with plastic, leaving the cadavers preserved, odorless and rigid, yet flexible enough to be free-standing.

Beijing Today first covered the controversial corpses when they made their national debut in February in the northeastern port city of Dalian. Public

and media response to that show was mixed, and there was even some speculation that the bodies used were those of people who had received the death penalty.

Li Renzhen, a taxi driver in Dalian, told *Beijing Today*, "According to Chinese tradition, we should show respect for dead bodies. If they are being used to make money, it's unthinkable."

Professor Chen Kequan, deputy director of the Chinese Society for Anatomical Sciences and a co-organizer of the show, said, "The exhibition is scheduled to be open for one month, but if public response is good, we will extend that to four months." He added that the bodies may go on a larger national tour in the future.



The Chaoyang Homeless Shelter needs help so it can continue to pay for Tian-tian's leukemia treatments.

Photo by Li Tianji

Shelter Comes to Rescue of Abandoned Boy

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Local media attention is shining light on the case of Tiantian, a four-year-old local boy who has been living in the Chaoyang Homeless Shelter since he was abandoned last autumn. He has been diagnosed with leukemia and the station has already spent over 20,000 yuan on his treatment and desperately needs more money to continue doing so.

One day last October, an unidentified woman took Tiantian to fruit vendor Wang Jian and asked Wang to look after him for a while she searched for his father. The woman never came back.

Wang reported the incident to the police, who were not able to get the boy to disclose the whereabouts of his family or his identity. He was handed over to the shelter on October 16.

"When we got him, he did not look healthy. He was very thin and had some lesions on his forehead and face. Our doctor suspected he had leukemia, a diagnosis later confirmed at the Capital Institute of Pediatrics. We also found a pinprick along his spine, a sign he had already been tested for leukemia and was abandoned because he had the disease," a shelter employee surnamed Hu told *Beijing Youth Daily* last Sunday.

Out of its own budget, the shelter paid for Tiantian to undergo one month of treatment at the Capital Institute of Pediatrics. The treatment was effective and his lesions disappeared, but the high costs were a heavy burden for the shelter.

However, that did not stop the shelter's management from sending him to the institute again last month when new lesions appeared.

From his hospital bed, Tiantian told *Beijing Youth Daily* that he did not miss his mother, he missed his "adopted aunts and uncles" at the shelter.

"We can't turn Tiantian out, even though our shelter is supposed to just be a place for temporary aid and we don't have much money. Thanks to media reports, however, some companies have already contacted us about providing money to help Tiantian," the shelter's director, surnamed Cao, told *Beijing Today* yesterday.

Customs Saves Chipmunks' Skins

By Zhou Ying

Alert Beijing Customs officers saved 1,500 chipmunks from being skinned and turned into coats and scarves last Monday.

The rodents, considered key protected animals in Beijing, were uncovered during a routine airfreight inspection and have since been turned over to the Beijing Zoo, a customs official who would not give his name told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

A Tianjin-based enterprise had entrusted International Transport Co. to ship the chipmunks to Italy under the false declaration of "hamsters." *Beijing Youth Daily* reported that customs officers found the striped rodents in 30 small iron cages. About 300 of the tiny hamsters inside the cages were already dead.

Keepers at the Beijing Zoo have temporarily settled the chipmunks in pens made to replicate their normal environs. One keeper said that the animals appeared very skittish their first day at the zoo, but "now they look better after a good rest and some food."

Deputy head keeper Zhang Yao-hua said the zoo would do its best to care for the chipmunks until the proper time and place was found to return them to the wild. "They could never adapt to life in captivity," he added.

Hands off Our Houses

By Wang Xiaoxiao

During the past few years, a new trend has been growing in Wenzhou. Property speculators have been buying up houses and then selling them on at higher prices. This activity is nothing new, but the number of people in Wenzhou involved in this business is now believed to be around 100,000. And the buying is not limited to Zhejiang Province; the speculators have also purchased a considerable number of houses in some eastern cities such as Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen.

People call this “stir-frying houses”. The Wenzhou buyers usually buy a lot of houses at one time, even several buildings or houses in one area. Wherever they go, the local house prices skyrocket.

According to one official in charge of financial affairs in Wenzhou, the local stir-fryers have spent around 100 billion yuan in total on buying houses. One effect this has had in Wenzhou has been a sharp rise in the city's GDP, along with a boost to house prices.

“Nearly everyone in Wenzhou is now stir-frying houses. If the rate of return is about 15 percent, the real estate investment is more profitable than any other industry

“I think to ‘stir-fry’ houses is speculative, not rational, but not illegal. The price rises show the market for what the Wenzhou group is doing, or else they would have disappeared by now.”

and can be regarded as the first industry of Wenzhou,”one Wenzhou house purchaser was quoted as saying in China Business Herald on October 24 last year.

Though it isn't specifically illegal, the authorities are worried this kind of behavior is getting out of hand. So the Nanjing government in Jiangsu Province promulgated a regulation to forbid house stir-frying on April 1. Nanjing is the first city to interfere in the business officially. According to the regulation, those who want to buy a house must use their own names. They can't then change the names of the purchasers when it comes to sign-



Real estate buyers announce their arriving in Beijing in 2002

Photo by Photocomer

ing the contract for the house.

Guo Hongding, deputy director of the Nanjing Real Estate Management Bureau, says the regulation is aimed at cracking down on speculators.

Some other cities have carried out some taxation measures to discourage the practice, due to the anger of local citizens. But

should the Wenzhou group really be forbidden or restricted?

Yin Zhongli, *Institute of Finance, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences*

It's time for our government to do something to stop these house speculators. The fake prosperity brought by these people is very dangerous to the lo-

cal real estate industry because sooner or later it will fade away. The bigger the bubble in the real estate industry now, the more serious the problems will be in the future.

The real estate market is similar to the stock market; prices can be easily manipulated. So the real estate market needs some supervision as well. The Wenzhou group is actually trying to gain a sudden profit with their large amount of capital. The role they are playing is similar to that of stock market speculators.

If the measures our government takes are not proper, these speculators will have opportunities to gain sudden profits, and the prices of houses might get further out of control. So I think our government should collect high taxation from those who buy and sell houses just to make money.

Ma Jinlong, *Chairman of Wenzhou Association on the Economy*

I think to stir-fry houses is speculative, not rational, but not illegal. Because of the Wenzhou group, the prices of houses in certain cities has indeed risen a lot, which can be a disaster for low-income citizens. However, trading in real estate is legal, and the price rises show the market for what the Wenzhou group is doing, or else they would have disappeared by now.

As to the experts or government, I think they should remind these investors of the risk and irrational factors in such speculation; but they don't have any right to interfere.

Wang Honghong, *a member of the group*

I've been doing this business for almost two years and I have bought two apartments in Nanjing and Hangzhou. For us, a purchase group of over a hundred, we can usually get a discount, and when the prices rise, we sell the houses.

We are not rich investors; I just buy these houses with my spare capital. Those who invest all they have in real estate are actually not that many. Most of us in Wenzhou are not likely to do things beyond our ability.

Lei Kun, *economist*

We are born to hate speculative behavior, so all of us, including government officials, economists and common citizens have a negative opinion of group house purchasing. Some cities have even carried out some regulations to limit selling houses to non-locals. The continuous rise in house prices is blamed on these group purchasers, but is that fair?

Have we really calculated systematically how much higher the Wenzhou capital has put forward the house prices? The reasons why house prices rise

are many, including macro economic factors.

According to the recent reports, the Wenzhou groups have mostly bought high-quality houses, which are actually not that closely related to the common citizens. So the policies carried out to limit the purchase of houses in some cities are not that reasonable I think. This is actually one kind of discrimination — you can't buy a house in this city just because your hukou is from somewhere else.

Li Jinshou, *Secretary-General, Wenzhou municipal government*

The trade in houses is a form of market behavior. First, the government has no right to interfere, and second, even if we did, I don't think it would have much effect. Moreover, the trade is not illegal. What the government should do is respect the market and give some rational guidance.

Wang Hui, *a citizen in Chengdu*

It's been so hard for me to save up for a house. Now, the house prices have risen again because of the activities of the Wenzhou house buyers, so I still can't afford the house. I've heard that the Wenzhou groups have a bad reputation and cities such as Nanjing and Hangzhou have carried out restrictive policies like taxing sales of second-hand houses. I hope Chengdu will carry out some policies of this kind as soon as possible to hold back the Wenzhou groups.

Liu Yigang, *manager of a real estate company in Shanghai*

The Wenzhou groups should really be restricted now. We used to welcome them in the past, but as time has gone by, we've found what they did is actually not good for us. A lot of Wenzhou people are gaining a lot by reselling our houses, which harms our interests. Besides, because they don't live in the houses they buy, the rate of occupancy is low.

Yang Jianwen, *Institute of Economics, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences*

I think the concept of house buying makes sense. I've heard that one Nanjing real estate company refused to sell houses to the Wenzhou groups. Why? They buy the houses at the market price and later sell them at a higher market price. Is there anything wrong with that?

The Wenzhou groups monopolize part of the market and are able to gain profit because of that. If the government really wants the real estate market to develop, it should first break the Wenzhou groups' monopoly. If everyone has the same chance to know about the market, the possibilities for the Wenzhou groups to take advantage of others will be greatly reduced.

By Dong Nan

Would you like to eat sushi off the naked body of an attractive young woman? The question's academic really, as a restaurant in Kunming that started the Japanese-style culinary treat last week received a swift rap on the knuckles from the local authorities and was ordered to cancel the offer. But the idea of slurping sushi, sashimi and other delicacies off young women's bodies has stoked a frenzied debate.

The owner of the restaurant told Yunnan Daily, a Kunming based newspaper, that “naked sushi” was a traditional food culture in Japan. Many Japanese believe that young women are pure in both their hearts and bodies, and can inspire guests' appetites.

He stressed that the advert he put out for willing young women required them to be “healthy, pure and slim”. The two young women selected were both university students. They were happy to participate voluntarily without pay. Before serving up the food, they took a shower for half an hour with salt water to ensure cleanliness. It wasn't the full deal, though: in Japan, the women are supposed to be totally naked, but the two volunteers in Kunming had their more sensitive areas covered up.

“It's a combination of human beings and nature, culture and food,” said the restaurateur. The price? A thousand yuan per person.

As the story circulated in the local media, many people showed an interest, their opinions varying from admiration to outrage. The Yunnan Health Bureau, however, swiftly forbade the idea and punished the restaurant on the grounds that the two models did not have health licenses as workers in the food industry. However, discussions on the issue continue.

Wang Jue, *Yunnan citizen, age 45*

It is an insult to women, typical male chauvinism. I would not eat like that, and I don't know who could do such a sick thing. Maybe there is no law forbidding this kind of thing, but it violates the traditional morals of China and is sure to be disdained. I think what the health bureau did was right.

Wang, *waiter at a Japanese restaurant in Beijing, 23*



You take a little bit from here and you dip it in there...

rant in Beijing, 23

I have been working in a Japanese restaurant for more than one year, but have never heard of this. I guess it is not a mainstream item in Japanese food culture. Personally, I think Japanese food is delicious and healthy. Most people would like that, but there is no need to offer such a strange and immoral service as this. As to the two girls, I feel pity for them — they are college students and receive all that education. I would expect them to do something more respectable.

Zhou, *retired cook, Beijing, 62*

I think there are many good things in traditional Japanese food culture, just as there are in China. But the restaurant chose the worst part of it. How stupid they are. Anyway, I don't believe such a sick thing can inspire appetite.

Aijingjing1980, *Internet surfer at sina.com*

I am not criticizing anyone. I just wonder what is wrong with our society. Almost everything uses sex as an eyeball catcher. Maybe the decline of mainstream culture gives a place to low-grade culture and pornography.

Bian Dalu, *middle school teacher, Gansu, 31*

This is just a commercial game played by businessmen. There's no need to judge whether it is good or bad. I believe that along with the development of society, such odd things will come and go, so let it be.

Cen Xihu, *sociologist, Nanjing*

I think it reflects the crisis of social morality in modern commerce. Businesses pursue publicity and commercial interests only, without respect for public opinion. People who defend naked sushi including the owner of the restaurant call it art or culture. Instead I think it shows the philistinism in popular culture. It is the problem of the whole of society. So we can't only criticize the restaurant.

Lu Ruihai, *editor of International Herald Leader, Beijing*

Though I do not like it and think it is sick, there must be some people that appreciate this service. Otherwise, the restaurant would not offer it. I think as long as it is legal and meets

sanitary standards, it should be allowed. Let people judge and choose by themselves.

Sun Zhenglong, *freelance writer, Jiangsu*

As long as there are needs and demands, as long as there are young women who are willing to offer themselves up, and as long as it is not against the law, no matter how many people dislike it, it has a reason to exist. An open and mature society should tolerate alternative things, and should not forbid something so easily, no matter how strange and unreasonable it might seem. Is it good or bad? Let the market decide.

Huang Chen, *college student, Beijing, 22*

Some say the two female college students were shameless and despicable. I don't think so. As long as this is their own choice, they have the right to do it. In fact, though I do not like the idea of naked sushi, and wouldn't participate in this service myself, I admire the two girls' courage personally. However, I think it is really not healthy and clean. What if the women perspire or break wind?

By Dong Nan

Chinese cities are experiencing a period of rapid growth, spurred both by rivalry and cooperation. While major and local centers try to outdo each other, Beijing and Shanghai in particular, they're also learning to capitalize on their particular strengths. Inevitably though, some cities are being left behind, sometimes because of over-confidence and sometimes because of inadequate pace of development, hindering business growth.

The conclusions came in the *Annual Report on Urban Competitiveness No. 2 — Positioning: Way to Mutual Prosperity*, which was released earlier this month. The report lists the 200 top Chinese cities which were believed to be most competitive in 2003. The report was conducted by a study group of the Finance and Economy Institute, under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

How competitive is your city?

As in 2002, Shanghai, Beijing, Hong Kong and Taipei were still the most competitive cities in China last year. Of the 200 top cities in the Chinese mainland, Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Tianjin, Ningbo, Nanjing and Wenzhou were the top ten in 2003.

Apart from that, many cities had changed position since 2002. Some traditionally prosperous cities such as Wuhan and Fuzhou had dropped down the rankings, while cities like Wuhu and Wenzhou that have enjoyed more recent booms leapt upwards.

In recent years, many foreign companies and national industries have moved northward and westward, and national policy has encouraged the development of western areas of China. This has contributed to the rapid development of cities such as Chongqing, Chengdu, Nanning and Urumchi.

The report analyzed competitiveness of cities based on four aspects: human resources, strength of enterprises, living circumstances and commercial environment.

The top ten cities in terms of human resources were Beijing, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Suzhou, Amoy, Wenzhou, Zhenjiang, Changzhou and Foshan. Cities with the strongest enterprises were mainly in Guangdong and Jiangsu, except those municipalities directly under the central government. The top ten were Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, Suzhou, Guangzhou, Nanjing, Tianjin, Dongwan, Zhongshan and Huizhou.

The result of the living circumstances survey might surprise some people. Shang-

Megacity China

2003 Top 50 Most Competitive Cities in China

cities	general order	in strength of enterprise	in circumstances	in commercial environment	in human resource
Shanghai	1	1	1	1	4
Beijing	2	2	2	2	1
Shenzhen	3	3	3	4	2
Guangzhou	4	5	4	3	3
Suzhou	5	4	9	21	5
Hangzhou	6	15	10	8	18
Tianjin	7	7	8	5	46
Ningbo	8	31	28	27	13
Nanjing	9	6	6	7	23
Wenzhou	10	39	25	32	7
Dalian	11	14	18	11	40
Qingdao	12	12	12	12	16
Amoy	13	11	14	17	6
Wuxi	14	25	15	23	12
Foshan	15	23	7	19	10
Dongwan	16	8	5	15	24
Zhongshan	17	9	20	28	22
Jinan	18	33	16	20	38
Zhuhai	19	16	13	26	28
Changzhou	20	28	21	37	9
Chongqing	21	20	24	9	39
Huizhou	22	10	22	40	17
Chengdu	23	34	29	13	32
Xi'an	24	18	32	14	29
Shaoxing	25	37	40	45	36
Wuhan	26	27	19	6	27
Changchun	27	26	47	25	33
Changsha	28	32	35	24	19
Shenyang	29	13	31	10	31
Yantai	30	17	44	36	35
Wuhu	31	49	50	46	41
Nantong	32	38	36	39	11
Harbin	33	24	17	16	15
Quanzhou	34	44	26	38	37
Taizhou	35	45	37	44	14
Weihai	36	22	42	41	44
Jiaxing	37	42	49	47	25
Hefei	38	35	39	33	34
Nanchang	39	36	23	29	45
Qinhuangdao	40	47	38	34	49
Zhengzhou	41	29	33	22	42
Fuzhou	42	19	27	18	47
Hohhot	43	46	43	43	43
Zhenjiang	44	50	41	48	8
Jinhua	45	43	46	50	21
Shijiazhuang	46	21	34	30	48
Zibo	47	30	48	49	20
Urumchi	48	41	11	35	26
Nanning	49	40	30	31	30
Xuzhou	50	48	45	42	50

hai, Beijing, Shenzhen and Guangzhou, which are often criticized for their serious pollution, ranked the top four. Cities like Chengdu, Weihai and Fuzhou, which are generally considered to have better environments, did not get such high positions on the list.

According to the report, this was because the crucial point in deciding the quality of a city's living circumstances was how easy it was for people to start businesses there. The natural environment was given less significance. The top ten were Shanghai,

Beijing, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Dongwan, Nanjing, Foshan, Tianjin, Suzhou and Hangzhou, mainly in south China.

The top ten cities in terms of commercial environment were Shanghai, Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Wuhan, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Chongqing and Shenyang. These large cities all have greater advantages in information, services and infrastructure than smaller centers.

Cooperation and competition

The report found that many Chinese cities had arrived at

a clear understanding of their particular local strengths and had taken practical measures to make the most of them.

For example, cities in the Yangtse River delta had formed a complementary structure, based around Shanghai. While Shanghai pays more attention to commerce and the service industry, other nearby cities such as Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Ningbo and Huzhou in Jiangsu and Zhejiang have decided to focus on production, and the electronics industry in particular. That way, Shanghai can provide its mature financial, trade and transportation systems, and other cities take advantage of their cheaper labor costs and local resources.

But it's not all cooperation. Cities also compete with each other, in terms of major functions and image. It's well known that Beijing and Shanghai are competing to be the economic, financial, scientific and international exhibition centers of China. Wuhan, Changchun, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Hefei and Shenzhen have all declared plans to build the "Silicon Valley of China". And in the west, Chengdu, Chongqing and Xi'an are competing to be seen as the top city.

The competition is also fierce within the provinces, usually between the capital of the province and another rising city, such as Guangzhou versus Shenzhen in Guangdong. There's also Hangzhou versus Ningbo in Zhejiang; Suzhou versus Wuxi in Jiangsu; Jinan versus Qingdao in Shandong; and Shenyang versus Dalian in Liaoning.

Mistakes and problems

Amidst this rush for wealth and recognition, there have been casualties.

Many cities crave overnight success, and have made excessively optimistic plans blindly. According to the report, one city in north China with a population of less than 300,000 people came up with a municipal construction plan that aimed to make it "the central city of North China", and "a new international metropolis". To meet this target, the city planned to build 30 skyscrapers in anticipation of a commercial boom which has not yet fully materialized.

However, some cities have suffered from the opposite problem: moving too slowly. In some cities, where the local authori-

Competitiveness of Nine Metropolitan Districts

district	population (million)	GDP in 2002 (billion yuan)	exports (billion dollars)	growth rate	GDP per capita (thousand yuan)
Taipei	22.52	2400	112.6	3.50%	106.57
Hong Kong	39.22	2420	349.3	6.61%	61.7
Shanghai	94.77	2120	97.8	13.37%	22.36
Beijing	65.1	954.4	35.5	11.08%	15.68
Qing Ji	47.14	771.8	19.1	13.50%	16.37
Shen Da	39.78	554	11.4	12%	13.92
Cheng Yu	82.97	562.2	3.7	10%	6.77
Wuhan	70.22	565.4	2.2	10.66%	8.05
Xi'an	25.83	164.6	1.3	10%	6.37

ties lacked far-sightedness or the ability to conduct effective research, development has lagged behind. Plans that would take three years to execute in south-east China can take five years or more elsewhere. This inevitably hinders local commerce.

Some cities have also refused to adjust to diminishing fortunes in recent years. Former boomtowns that have failed to adapt have withered and been passed-by.

Tianjin, a large city that used to be an economic and financial center, found itself facing harder times in the 1990s, for many reasons. The city still had advantages in manufacturing, but determination to maintain its status as a financial center and neglect of new chances led to greatly diminished fortunes.

Other cities have suffered from being unable to make up their minds what the principal local industry should be. Zhuhai, a city in the Pearl River delta, planned to be "a middle-size city with high-quality construction" in 1999. But in 2001, the plan changed, and the city was to be turned into a hi-tech manufacturing center. In 2003, the local authorities changed their minds again and decided tourism was the industry to focus on.

Future: nine metropolitan districts

The report says there's a trend of major Chinese cities either developing closer ties with or swallowing up nearby cities and becoming more unified metropolitan districts. The report mentions nine such districts in particular:

Taipei: Taipei has the highest GDP per capita of any city in China.

Hong Kong: this includes Hong Kong, Macao, Guangzhou and Shenzhen, with smaller towns like Zhuhai, Foshan, Jiangmen, Huizhou, Qingyuan, Dongwan and Zhongshan also being drawn in. Hong Kong is the center of finance and international trade, while cities in Guangzhou have advantages in

manufacturing.

Shanghai: with Shanghai as the center, bonds are growing tighter with Nanjing and Hangzhou, and the area extends to Wuxi, Changzhou, Suzhou, Nantong, Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Ningbo, Wenzhou, Jiaxing, Huzhou, Shaoxing, Jinhua, Zhoushan and Taizhou. The report says this is the most promising metropolitan district in China.

Beijing: with Beijing and Tianjin as the center, major local partner cities include Shijiazhuang, Tangshan, Qinhuangdao, Baoding, Zhangjiakou, Chengde and Langfang. The district has advantages in human resources, science and technology, services and basic construction. But competition among the various cities hinders cooperation.

Qing Ji: this area centers on Qingdao and Jinan, and includes Zibo, Dongying, Yantai, Weifang, Taian, Weihai and Rizhao, in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River. It is the center of Shandong, and the economic growth rate has been rapid in recent years.

Shen Da: this area takes Shenyang and Dalian as the center, and includes Anshan, Fushun, Benxi, Jinzhou, Yingkou, Fuxin, Liaoyang, Panjin, Tieling and Huludao. It has long been an industrial center.

Cheng Yu: this area is based around Chengdu and Chongqing as the center, and includes Zigong, Luzhou, Deyang, Mianyang, Suining, Neijiang, Leshan, Nanchong and Yibin. A traditional industrial center of China, it is also developing as a high-tech center.

Wuhan: centered on Wuhan, this area includes Jiujiang, Xinyang, Huangshi, Shiyang, Yichang, Xiangfan, Ezhou, Jingzhou, Xiaogan, Suizhou and Yuyang, in central and southern China. Its industry system is complete, but the area is experiencing a "brain drain" problem.

Xi'an: focused on Xi'an, this area includes Tongchuan, Baoji, Xianyang, Weinan and Hanzhong. It is an important industrial base and logistical and trading center for west China.

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By Sun Ming

The case against Qiu Yan, who recently took third place in the World Press Photo (WPP) contest, was held on Monday in Wuhan, Hubei Province.

Qiu, a photographer for *Wuhan Evening News*, is accused of staging his photo, titled "Wedding During SARS". The WPP contest, held in the Dutch capital of Amsterdam, is considered one of the most prestigious press photo competitions in the world.

The plaintiff, Chen Ying, the apparent "groom" in the photo, is unmarried. He says that not only was he not in a relationship with the girl in the photo, but it's also ruined his relationship with the girl he was going out with at the time. He says that Qiu Yan and *Wuhan Evening News* have infringed on his reputation and he's demanding 150,000 yuan in compensation.

It's the first time the WPP has been involved in a lawsuit since it began in 1957. Chinese photographers have been recognized by the WPP since 1959, and 10 have won prizes, with three taking the top prize.

Prize leads to lawsuit

On February 13, 2004, the website sina.com released an item of news that drew attention from all over the country. It reported that two Chinese photographers had picked up awards at the WPP awards for 2004.

Freelance photographer Lu Guang's "Aids Village, Henan Province" earned him the top prize in the Contemporary Issues Stories category. And Qiu Yan took third prize in the Daily Life category.

The second day, on February 14, *Wuhan Evening News* covered the news on the front page and published Qiu's photo again.

It was the first time Qiu had won after being in the running on four previous occasions. However, trouble soon followed.

Models required

On March 23, Chen called *Wenzhou City News*, a local newspaper in Wenzhou, his home-

Did He Fake it?

Photographer accused of staging prize-winning shot



A prize-winning photo. But is it genuine?

Photo by Photocome

town, and claimed that the photo was a fake. Chen said the whole thing had been staged.

Chen claimed in the court that on May 5, 2003, Qiu came to the Sese Wedding Dress Photo Shop to ask for models to help

shoot photos. Qiu picked Chen and another girl as the bride and groom.

"I've been in Wuhan for two years, and I am a model for Sese Photo Shop. You can tell from the picture that it was taken just

outside our shop. The little girl who was holding the wedding dress was also picked from our photo shop," said Chen in court.

Chen recited the caption for the photo in court: "On May 5, a couple cross Yangzi road to have

their wedding photo taken. Love and marriage still continue during the SARS outbreak."

Wuhan Evening News published the photo on May 7 and republished it on Valentine's Day after the WPP awards. Chen said

that the photo caused his break-up with his girlfriend, so he brought a lawsuit against Qiu and *Wuhan Evening News* on March 25.

Chen brought a reporter from *Shanghai Morning Post* to Sese Wedding Dress Photo Shop on Monday afternoon. The reporter saw the same railings outside the shop that were in the photo. "When shooting, we left the shop and walked across the road. Qiu stood opposite and took the photo," the newspaper quoted Chen as saying on Tuesday.

"I am under great pressure now. The photo shop had promised to bear witness, but then they changed their minds," said Chen.

Teenage bride

In court, Chen showed the written witness statement provided by the "bride", Liao Hong (pseudonym) and a copy of her ID card. According to the ID card, Liao was born in July 1986, which means that she wasn't yet 17 years old when the wedding photo was taken. In China, it's forbidden for a woman to get married below the age of 20.

Liao, in her witness statement, claimed she had a good friendship with Chen, but denied they were lovers. "One day in May, 2003, I was introduced by a model in our shop to Qiu Yan, who was seeking wedding models for his photo series themed 'Love stories during SARS'. He picked me and Chen out of four models."

Liao said that under the direction of Qiu, they made about 40 photos on May 5. Qiu pointed to the photo that later won the prize and said, "This one would be perfect if the old man in the photo moved a little forward and give a little space for the girl who is holding the wedding dress."

Beijing Today called Sese Wedding Dress Photo Shop on Wednesday. A staff member admitted that Chen had worked there, and was not in love with Liao.

"We are not going to get involved in this case. But because of the lawsuit, our photo shop has had a rising number of customers," said the staff member.

Qiu absent from the court

Qiu, who has won the China News Prize award and Ten Excellent Youth Photographers prize in China, did now show up to the court. Instead, the Chief of the Legal Section of *Wuhan Evening News* took the defendant's stand.

He denied that the shot had been staged. When asked how Qiu confirmed the identities of the bride and groom in the photo, he answered: "Qiu did ask Chen and Liao whether they were lovers, but considering it was the SARS time, he did not have much conversation with them."

The defendant provided various witnesses from photo shop, trying to prove that the two were in love at that time.

Shanghai Morning Post said last Sunday that Qiu denied the accusations. He claimed the photo was not staged. Qiu told the newspaper that Chen and his family found him after he won the WPP prize and asked for 100,000 yuan as a reward, but Qiu refused.

Chen said that his father did ask for compensation since the photo had broken up Chen's relationship with his girlfriend. Qiu was willing to offer 20,000 yuan, but the family did not accept that offer.

Is this kind of thing common?

"There has been a long debate about made-up photos in Chinese photography. Many of the photos considered by the WPP are created through design and planning. The final effect is the only criteria for judging a photograph," said Wang Wenlan, Chief of the Photography Department from *China Daily* and vice chairman of the Chinese Photographer's Association.

However, Li Shuanglong, dean of the Department of Journalism and Communication of Fudan University, said that whatever the situation is, journalists and photographers should be responsible for truth.

"Photographers should have their ethics. Not intervening in the affair that a photographer is shooting is a rule," said Li.

By Shan Jinliang / Zong Yiduo / Yang Fan

When a three-year-old Ethiopian girl came to China to see her father in September 2001, she and her family were probably not expecting to get embroiled in a row over a photo of the little girl.

The girl's father, Haile B. Wondafrash, said that last year he saw the picture of his daughter being used in an advertisement for Nanjing Yase Advertising Company. He immediately filed a lawsuit against the company and demanded compensation of 70,000 yuan. He got 5,000 yuan eventually after two hearings in the district and city level courts.

Nanjing Yase angrily refuted the charge and said they had been cheated by Wondafrash. The company's lawyer Sun Gang said they were planning a counter-suit against him.

I recognize that picture

Wondafrash had come to study a masters degree in journalism at Nanjing University, and he was joined by his wife and daughter in September 2001. In August 2003, Wondafrash saw the offending advertisement with his daughter's picture on the wall of a local cinema, according to the petition he filed at the local court.

Wondafrash added in the petition that as he had not given permission for use of the picture, Yase had infringed on his daughter's image rights, so he hired a lawyer to file the suit against Yase at Baixia District Court. Haile assumed the photo had been taken by Yase in a secret way and he asked for compensation of 70,000 yuan.

When the case was first heard at Baixia District People's Court, Yase said the girl in the picture was not Wondafrash junior. The company's lawyer Sun Gang told *Beijing Today* on Thursday that the company put up the advertisement in October 2002, and that the photo had been down-

loaded from the Internet.

The local court then arranged for Nanjing Jindun Legal Test Center to test the photos provided by Wondafrash and by Yase. They found the girl in the Yase advert was indeed young miss Wondafrash.

Baixia District Court delivered its judgment in January 2004, saying Nanjing Yase must take down the advertisement and pay 5,000 yuan in compensation as well as 3,000 yuan for

the photo test.

Second court affirms judgment

Neither party in the lawsuit was satisfied with the result, so they both submitted petitions to the Nanjing People's Intermediate Court. Nanjing Yase called for the judgment of the first hearing to be thrown out. Wondafrash continued to demand the compensation should be 70,000 yuan.

On March 30, the court issued its judgment. It said Yase

had violated the image rights of the little girl, but it only ordered Yase to pay the 5,000 yuan compensation decided on in the original court judgement, plus 2000 yuan to cover Wondafrash's legal expenses.

Both sides were still unhappy with the second judgment. Wondafrash's lawyer Xu told *Xiandai Kuabao* on March 31, "We wanted 70,000 yuan, but the court only gave us 5,000 yuan. The gap is too big. The

penalty for Yase is too light, so it won't stop such things happening again."

Meanwhile, Yase questioned the legality of the photo test. "The legal test of the photos was not conducted according to the relevant laws," the company's lawyer Sun told *Beijing Today*. "The legal test should contain the appropriate technology, but the Legal Test Center refused to divulge how they did the test, saying the technology used for police detecting could not be revealed."

Wondafrash said he could recognize that the photo used by Yase was his daughter at first glance, but Yase said there were a few clear differences between the two photos in the lips, nose and cheekbones.

Where is the picture from?

When the Intermediate Court asked Yase to provide the source of the photo, Yase said the photo from Sohu.com could not be found. Instead, they offered a document from Yu Bin, an employee from another advertising company.

"I bought a VCD in a computer market in Zhujiang Lu, Nanjing in July 1999," Yu said in the document. "The VCD had the same photo as the one used by Yase. So it is impossible that Yase could have used a photograph of the Ethiopian girl since I bought the VCD in July 1999." The court dismissed the evidence as inadequate.

Wondafrash told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday that he was not very satisfied with the result, but he plans no further legal action for more compensation. When asked to comment on Yase's plans, he said, "It is up to them."

Yase's lawyer Sun said some officials at the company wanted to give up further legal procedures because the compensation was not that big, but others wanted to push ahead. He said Yase is preparing documents and will ask the Nanjing Procuratorate to throw out the judgment.

Who's That Girl?

Company sued for using photo without permission



Haile B. Wondafrash recognized his daughter immediately.

By Philomena Cho

When Australian Brian Wallace first backpacked his way from Inner Mongolia to Qinghai, Xingjiang and Xi'an in 1984, little did he imagine that less than a decade later, he'd create one of the most influential contemporary art galleries in Beijing.

Wallace took the scenic route to find his calling. After graduating with a business degree in Australia, he spent several years as a marketing researcher before realizing he wasn't having fun anymore. The cure? Travel. "I was trekking in Papua New Guinea," recounts Wallace, "when I just woke up one day and knew I had to go to China. I bought a ticket that day before I could change my mind."

China-bound

Setting off on his first China trip in 1984, he criss-crossed the country by train in just five weeks. "Those were the days when you still had to get permission to go to Kashgar," Wallace recalls smiling. "You see so much more by train, the diversity of what I saw impressed me."

It made such an impression that Wallace came back for more in 1985 by enrolling in a five-month language course. After completing that stint, he returned the following year to continue his Chinese language studies. This time, Wallace began organizing his first art exhibitions.

"I met a lot of artists by going to shows. So, I ended up with a lot of Chinese friends who were artists, with no hope of organizing themselves," he says. This initial flurry of artistic activity came to a temporary halt in 1989. "Since one couldn't do anything after '89 anyway, I decided to learn about art history and studied at the Central Fine Arts Academy for a year."

By 1991, Wallace faced a decision after five years in the nation's capital. "I had reached this crossroads of either going home or staying and opening up a gallery. It just seemed so obvious to me that Beijing needed a dedicated contemporary art gallery. The economy was picking up, services in the city were opening up so it really made sense to stay," Wallace recalls.

Red Gate Gallery opened its doors in the summer of 1991. "Originally, we did shows at the Ancient Observatory," says Wallace. "So, I went back to them to ask about renting space. They said no, but told me about this place down the road - a recently renovated Ming Dynasty Corner Tower," he explains. The only one remaining of the four originals, the gorgeous 15th century tower was perfect. "The red doors are how we got our name," Wallace points out.

The early days were challenging to say the least. "We only had the top floor at that time, so we couldn't work during winter and had to operate from two spaces," he says. Renting an additional exhibition space in the China World complex from 1992 to 1999, Wallace was invited back to Red Gate in 2000 to take over the whole space with additional permission to build a small office in the corner, so the team wouldn't freeze in winter.

Mission

"Those were the very early days so there was nothing going on. The idea was to give younger artists a chance to exhibit, it's still our mission," says Wallace. "The quality of the artwork is very high here because of the good training," he adds. The gallery's events calendar is scheduled a year in advance to include shows of Red Gate artists as well as visiting curators, both international and domestic. Artists come by way of self-introduction, being seen in exhibits that Wallace visits regularly or introduced by the current stable of about two dozen Red Gate artists. "I look for distinctive work, saying something about what's going on in China with all the changes," Wallace notes of his selection criteria.

Opening Up the Red Gates

"The artwork is just so stimulating. It's amazing to be part of this exciting era, to keep working away. There is so much to do even though so much has already been done."

— Brian Wallace



Brian Wallace

Photos by Philomena Cho



Wallace stands beside a sculpture by Liang Suo called Nine Brothers.

Wallace established Beijing's first artist residency program ten years ago, with over 60 international artists having been through the program since, and this spring, Red Gate launched the first-ever domestic artist residency program. "It's for Chinese artists outside Beijing, who apply on a competitive basis," explains Wallace. Selected artists receive working space, living space and a stipend. Applications were collected at the end of March, with the lucky selected artists heading to Chengdu for their residency, to temporarily become part of the vibrant artist community there.

As for future expansions to the thriving artist residency program, Wallace says there are many choices. "There are so many gorgeous places to go. Those kinds of places would be so inspiring for the artists, it's just a question of setting it up."

Wallace is confident there is a market waiting for all this talent he's helping to nurture. "Just in the last 12 months, the number of commercial galleries in Beijing has doubled to about a dozen," he says. The relatively small number of galleries in Beijing as compared to elsewhere translates into greater cooperation. "We're all in this together. The scene



Wallace (middle) at an event show

Photo by Iris Miao

is not that big, so it's not that cut-throat. During the Beijing International Art Fair in April, all the major galleries were involved. The head of the Melbourne Art Fair was here on tour, going with me from one opening to another - and he was so surprised that a director of one gallery could just walk into the opening of another gallery without starting a turf war," says Wallace.

Indeed, the Beijing art scene now seems to welcome all comers. "Foreigners are not just on the fringes anymore. All major galleries are foreign operated, so they've become very integral to the contemporary art scene now and will undoubtedly encourage the further internationalization of the art scene."

Lisa Norton, on sabbatical in Beijing from her teaching position at The School of the Art Institute in Chicago, believes Red Gate has played a vital role. "Wallace functions as a catalyst here. From what I have seen,

he has been very successful in applying a business model to the art world here, and thus filling a gap, particularly internationally. And the residency program continues to grow so that's a great contribution."

Dialogue

In September, Wallace will welcome Brazilian artist Annabella Geiger to Red Gate to open her retrospective. "Now in her seventies, Geiger was at the vanguard of abstractionism," Wallace elaborates. As for the guest Australian and French curators and artists who have shown at Red Gate, he adds, "It's about getting more dialogue going, hence the last series we did was actually called *Dialogue with the Watchtower*."

In addition to introducing Beijing to bilingual artist floor talks and press lunches for new exhibition launches, Wallace has also launched an annual charity exhibition. Last Christmas, Red Gate opened a holiday show to benefit the Philip Hayden Foundation

(which takes in orphans requiring medical attention). During the show, limited edition calendars of the show's artworks sold for US\$500 each. "We sent them a check for 50,000 yuan in early March and hope to have another check for them soon," says Wallace happily of the successful event.

Despite Red Gate now having celebrated its first decade in business, Wallace never gets bored. "The artwork is just so stimulating. It's amazing to be part of this exciting era, to keep working away. There is so much to do even though so much has already been done," he says with a smile.

Domestic Art Market

Wallace gives China's authorities credit for allowing the domestic art market to develop. "The government is already involved in terms of letting various industries grow and not shutting down shows. You just have to look at the number of art fairs, auction houses, lifestyle and art magazines, curators, artist-run spaces and first-time international exhibitions to see how quickly this is developing."

"Funding bodies either public or private, things like annual grants, fellowships and scholarships though future development are likely to come more from the private side. Some of the things that Red Gate does actually cross-over into what a foundation would do elsewhere," he says.

But still there's more that could be done to help. "China doesn't yet have an art bank, whereby government funds are used to purchase and show art overseas," he says. "Also, there could be guidelines encouraging a certain percentage of new construction projects to invest in buying new art. Initially, this means government projects, but organizations can be set up to convince private developers to do the same."

Future Trends

Wallace's optimism about the future of contemporary art in China is infectious. "Artists today are far more confident in what they're doing and their place in China and more at peace with the changes. From the business perspective, the broadening of supporting structures means increasing opportunities for artists to be presented," he adds.

About the artists themselves, Wallace has had a unique vantage point to observe their rapid evolution during his time in China. "The younger generation of Chinese contemporary artists are more mature in a sense; they find it easier to take it easy," he says. "They're focused on art but they know they have to do a lot of work. This broader focus reflects the calming down of the overheating of the art market. So rather than expecting to be discovered as an overnight success, they're prepared to work at the business of art."

About future developments in Beijing's contemporary art scene, Wallace laughs and says, "If we keep talking about the Beijing Museum of Modern Art opening, then it'll happen sooner."



Wallace looks through a Chinese issue of Artlink.

By Zhang Huan

While Peking Opera is widely known, few people these days have heard of yangge opera, peculiar to Baiyu, a village in Beijing's Mentougou District. With a history of more than 400 years, yangge (not to be confused with the folk dance of the same name) predates Peking Opera by 240 years, and is the oldest traditional opera in Beijing. However today there remain only six yangge opera performers in Baiyu Village, three of them in their eighties, and the opera is on the verge of being lost.

A distinct local flavor

Baiyu Village is located in the mountainous area of Mentougou District, west of Beijing. In ancient times, it was the only pass in the west to Beijing and was thus a center of information exchange and a highly populated area.

Toward the end of the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the Shaanxi plain suffered a severe drought. The government sent a group of officials from the Directorate of the Imperial Academy, who were mostly from Geyang, Jiangxi Province, to the Baiyu area to oversee relief operations.

The imperial officials hit it off with the local officers after they discovered they had a common interest – Chinese opera. Integrating elements of the local operas, which had a strong folk flavor, with the famous *Geyang diao* from Jiangxi they created a new form of opera that later became known as the yangge opera of Baiyu.

Similar to Peking opera, yangge opera features five role types: *sheng* (young male), *dan* (female), *jing* (painted face), *mo* (old male) and *chou* (clown). The two forms also share many similarities in costume design and makeup.

However, yangge is unique in several ways. The singing style is characterized as simple yet vigorous, a feature well represented in the “crying” part. Yangge opera features nine distinct singing styles and 18 tune forms, providing wide scope for variations. Meanwhile the subject matter of the stories is very rich, vividly describing the lives of the local people in ancient times, providing a record of the process of young men taking the imperial examinations. Also, in contrast to the two-stringed *hu* used in Beijing Opera, a four-string *hu* is used for the accompanying music.

In full bloom

Chen Yonglu is the youngest of the six surviving yangge performers. “In its full bloom, the opera was very popular in the neighborhood. There were more than 60 actors in our opera company and our repertoire



Photos by Cai Daizheng

Opera on the Brink



‘Most actors were illiterate. The lines were passed on orally from generation to generation.’
- Chen Yonglu, 63



boasted over 40 different plays. Every year from the second day of the first lunar month to the second of the second, we would perform opera in the village day and night and there was always a large crowd in front of the stage. For 30 days we changed plays every day,” Chen told *Beijing Today* last Thursday.

Chen began to learn yangge at the age of five. His mother was an opera fan and she once took Chen to visit an old actor in the village and asked him to teach her son. Every day after school, he would go to practice. “My master was quite strict with me. If I could not sing it right he would beat me.” Chen’s cousin learned the opera too. Chen remembers once his cousin was performing on the stage and sang his part wrong.

Several masters rushed unto the stage and pummelled and kicked him. “My cousin’s wife became enraged and said to the masters, ‘it’s only a play. Why are you so strict?’” smiles Chen, “We didn’t learn to sing opera, we were beaten to sing opera.”

Chen says his master told him that during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the Baiyu yangge opera troupe was invited to the Forbidden City to perform as part of the 60th birthday celebrations for Emperor Qianlong. It was said that the emperor had invited the troupe to stay in the city, but the actors did not want to leave their hometown, so after the celebration, they all returned to Baiyu. “The old actors were very proud of it,” says Chen.

Like many traditional skills,

the opera could only be passed on to males, never to females. All the roles were performed by men. “Most actors were illiterate. The lines were passed on orally from generation to generation. Many actors even did not know the exact meaning of the lines they were singing,” said Chen.

Modern difficulties

The decline of the yangge opera started from the Cultural Revolution, when anything related to what was termed “feudal culture” came under fire. Although performances were banned, the costumes were preserved undamaged, thanks to the opera’s widespread popularity. But the 10-year break in performing was too much to recover from. Young people stopped learning it and

the old performers just get older.

Now the opera group has only six members: Tan Yongzhen, Tan Yongcheng and Liu Fenglin who are all 82 years old; Chen Wenliang and Chen Dengren, both 74, and Chen Yonglu, 63 years old. The six old men are no longer able to put on yangge opera performances. “The last performance was four years ago. Since then, we have performed no more. The old actors died one by one and now we could not find enough people to sing all the parts,” said Chen.

For the last six actors, the most important thing is to prevent yangge opera from disappearing altogether. Tan Yongzhen is still in good health, which he attributes to his practice of yangge. His three

sons have gone to live in the city. “Sometimes deep in the night, I cannot get to sleep and I think about our plays: how many have we have left? Now people have many different entertainments. They do not need the opera any more,” says Tan.

Last year, Chen Yonglu called the old men together to make a record of all the lines, as each performer only memorizes his own part. Chen, who is almost blind, has written down the lines of four plays in his notebooks. “I don’t want to lose the opera passed on from our ancestors. I write down the lines and then I’ll ask an accompanist to write down the music. In this way, we can ensure our yangge opera survives even if we six all die,” he says.

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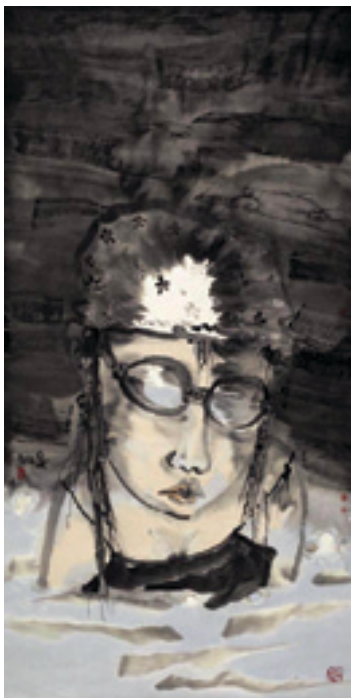
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Nuo Nuo, 2004, ink and wash on paper, 65 cm x 55 cm



Distant Mountains, 2004, ink and wash on paper, 65 cm x 55 cm



Flying with the Owl-Face, 2003, ink and wash on paper, 136 cm x 68 cm



Fu, 2004, ink and wash on paper, 65 cm x 55 cm

Creating an Oasis

Liu Qinghe talks about art, life and spaces in between

By Darlene Lee

New takes on one of China's oldest art forms grace the walls of the Red Lake Gallery these days. Lakescape, an exhibition of ink wash paintings by contemporary artist Liu Qinghe, opened last Saturday and runs through May 9. His ink washes hark back to centuries past while providing a unique voice for expressing concerns and questions about modern society.

A contemporary voice

Liu purposefully avoids the abstraction that became the focus of heated debate among such influential curators as Li Xianting in the early 1980's, instead aiming work at fitting into a more commonplace context.

"I'm more interested in using ink wash to express daily life in a modern city, which I find more challenging in many ways than purely abstract work," he said. "My feeling is that ink wash has a classic aesthetic that lends itself to express today's issues."

Liu, a native of Tianjin, is one of China's most prominent artists in the contemporary ink wash movement and relatively young at just 43.

"Liu Qinghe captures the mood of a younger urban generation. Though not at odds with today's environment, they are unsure of their place in it. They are worried and react in many ways. Here the response is, in many cases, to suppress the difficulties and enjoy the quieter mo-



Floating with the Breeze, 2004, ink and wash on paper, 90 cm x 90 cm

ments," noted Brian Wallace of the Red Gate Gallery.

Indeed, stepping into the show is to suddenly leave behind the capital's bustle and enter a quiet, serene space created by Liu's doe-eyed women in water. "When I started this series in 2002, I focused on people in their natural environments. I never intentionally painted women in water," Liu said, somewhat surprised himself about the eventual dominance of the theme. "Even my wife kidded me about the resulting show."

Artistic philosophy

What has interested Liu most in his long and productive artistic career is, "Nature, by that I mean the forces which animate us and everything else. It's easy to forget about this in the current rush towards bigger and

better. I'd like to think that my work serves to remind us of who we really are, where we come from. So, I use ink wash to depict ordinary people in everyday environments."

It should come as no surprise that calmness is required to create such pictures of tranquility. "We artists need to be calm and remain centered, so that we're not swept away by things which ultimately are not substantive," mused Liu. "What's important is to not only understand what's going on but really to understand what and why you're doing what you're doing. That way, what comes out is more honest. It's also a good way to be able to enjoy life a little."

Though best known for his poetic ink washes, Liu notes, "I learned and worked in many oth-

er mediums. I ended up doing so much in ink wash because the nature of the medium with so much emphasis on white space seems to me to best match what I wish to express, making possible the interaction of open spaces."

A continuing story

Liu has exhibited in solo and group shows in cities around the world such as Berlin, Boston, Kuala Lumpur, Madrid, Paris, San Francisco, Seoul, Singapore, Sydney, Taipei and Vienna as well as all over China, including previous shows at Red Gate.

He said, "My last Red Gate exhibit opened during SARS. Only 14 people visited - even I didn't go. I worried that other people would go if I went, so I called them up and told them to stay home. Some people from the school were quarantined just

days before the show opened. So, this show could be seen as a continuation of what I didn't get to fully express last time, what I didn't finish saying."

Regarding this show, Liu continued, "For me, this series is more about the relationship of people to nature. The current works on display show a relationship which is close and mutually supportive. I think that in my previous work this relationship was much more adversarial and violent."

Though tradition calls for black hues to dominate ink wash works, Liu's introduction of pale blues coupled with images of women in water introduce a timeless, languid pace which belies the frenetic pace of activity "outside".

Sharing wisdom

Currently assistant professor in the Chinese Painting Department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Liu shares his experience with young artists on a daily basis. Liu characterized his teaching style as "non-traditional" in giving students lots of freedom, which he acknowledged, "gives them a lot of pressure as well."

He explained, "I look at my students as being equal to myself, particularly when looking at new things - they're often faster to pick up something than I am. I don't want students to copy me or to adopt some subservient position as student while I take a higher position as teacher. I experienced enough of that as a student that I don't want anyone else to have to go through that."

Instead, what Liu emphasizes to his artistic charges is creativity. "Without this, there's no other story. Only within creativity do we start looking at technique or content issues. Technique can be a very individual issue, so in a sense there's nothing to teach if technique is just about copying someone else," he explained.

Future plans

Liu stated that his main goal for the future would be to do a proper show. "I've been thinking about a show which explores several main themes over the past four or five years," he noted.

He hopes to turn those plans into reality within the next two years. He said, "It will also be a chance for me to work in other mediums other than ink wash. I find this gives me a fresh perspective on ink wash while also challenging me."

Success clearly has not gone to Liu's head. "I'm never very satisfied looking at my current work, so it's critical for me to keep growing. That, and to create a life which is neither too arduous nor too empty," he concluded.

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By Sun Ming

A song and dance performance showcasing the diverse cultures of Yunnan Province opens in Beijing tomorrow night.

Dynamic Yunnan is a medley integrating the primitive quintessence with modern interpretations of Yunnan's ethnic minority nationalities.

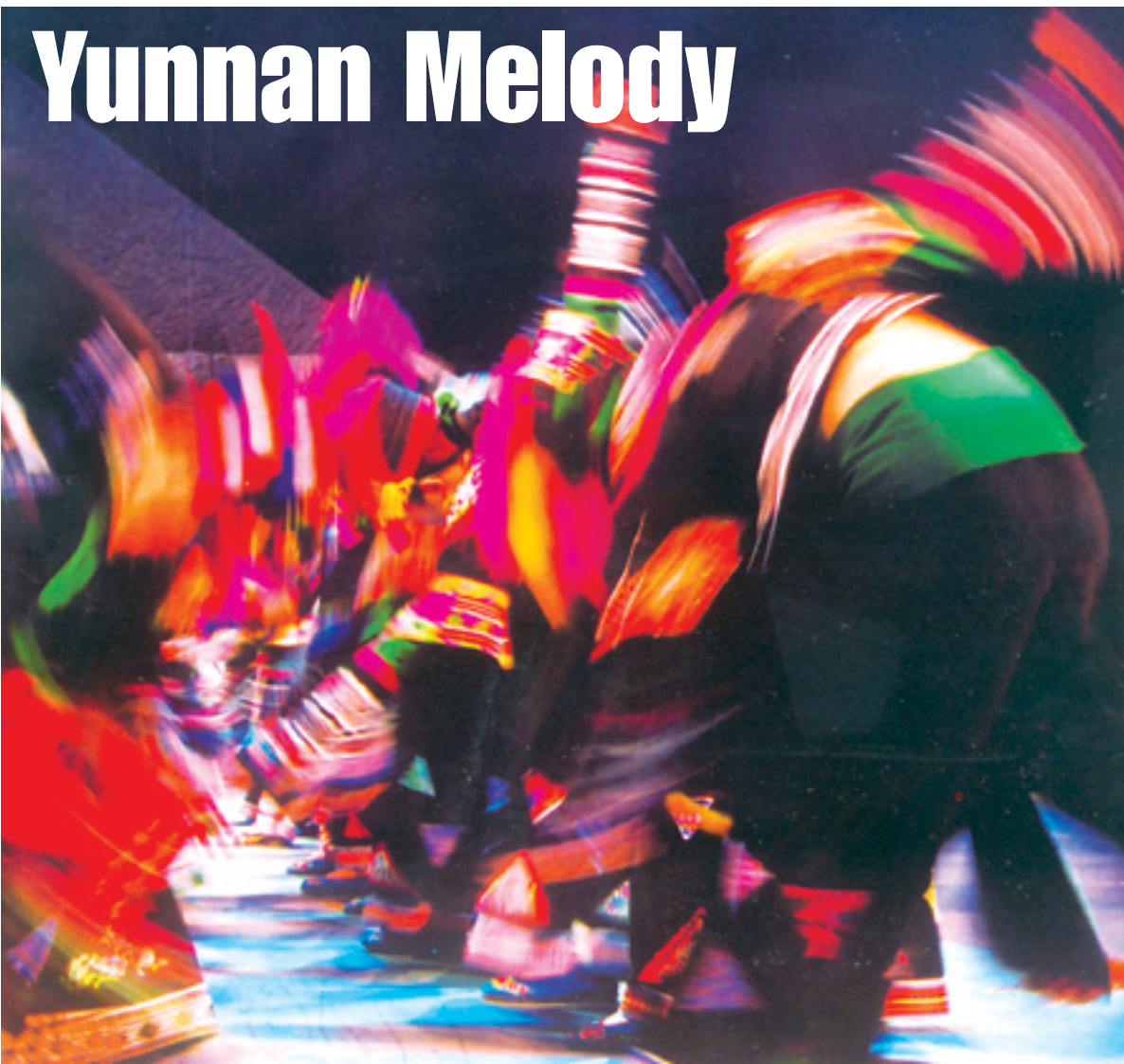
Yang Liping, a renowned dancer from Yunnan Province, stars in the production, of which she is also making her debut as choreographer and artistic director.

"Around 70 percent of the performers are Yunnan local ethnic minorities, preserving the simplicity and pure charm of their songs and dances," Yang said at a press conference in Beijing on March 17.

The medley gives a glimpse of the culture of more than 20 minority nationalities in Yunnan. All the costumes in *Dynamic Yunnan* are authentic, revealing the original designs of different ethnic cultures.

"In the show, primitiveness and tribalism of ethnic dances collide with exquisite and novel modern art concepts, offering the audience a series of dramatic impressions of Yunnan," said Jing Lin, the director of the performance, at the news conference.

Dynamic Yunnan is on at Poly Theater till April 16.



Yunnan Melody

Purely Jiang Xin

By Wang Yao

For her new album *Chuncui (Purity)*, released last month, rock star Jiang Xin not only wrote all the lyrics, but also introduces two tunes she composed herself, *Xu and Chen (Dust)*.

The credits list an impressive line-up of some of the top names in China's music business. Li

Yanliang, Gu San'er and Liang Jianfeng provide the instrumental backing while Xu Wei, He Yong and Gao Xiaosong helped with the production.

The first hit from the album, *Pandora*, is driven by a catchy guitar melody that provides a warm counterpoint to Jiang's expressive vocals.

With *Purity*, Jiang has shaken off her youthful, sometimes immature sound and revealed her true strength as a performer.



What's on DVD

By Wang Xiaochun

Schindler's List

Ten years after its cinema release, Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* has finally been released on DVD. As well as the Oscar winning movie itself, this version also contains the 72-minute documentary *Voice from the List*, which includes interviews with Holocaust survivors, and *Life of Oskar Schindler*. (DVD 9)

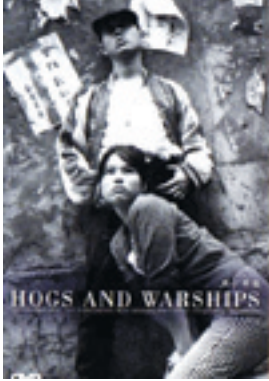
The Complete Nikkatsu Collection of Shohei Imamura Vol. 1

An encyclopedic companion to Shohei Imamura, a seminal New Wave director and dark chronicler of post-war Japan, this collection consists of five DVDs, and includes the films *Stolen Desire*, *In Front of West Ginza Station*, *Endless Desire*, *My Second Brother* and *Hogs and Battleships*, as well as trailers and a 55-minute documentary in which Imamura discusses his work. Japanese with Chinese subtitles. (DVD5)

Ten Minutes Older

Chen Kaige, Spike Lee, Bernardo Bertolucci, Werner Herzog ... 15 top international directors, each shooting a 10-minute film on the theme "time" joined to make this DVD a mini-panorama of world film. It was the inaugural film for the 2002 Cannes Festival.

It also contains a 50-minute documentary on the making of the film, and some ten trailers of other films. Original languages, Chinese and German subtitles. (DVD9)



WORLDWIDE

Britney Eyes China Show

Raunchy singer Britney Spears is in negotiations to take her Onyx Hotel tour to China. Chinese promoters are reportedly trying to lure the "Toxic" pop superstar to the communist country, even though China's cultural officials haven't given their OK to the plans yet. Members of Spears' production team are planning a trip to China this month to check potential venues. Mariah Carey became one of the biggest stars to play China with a pair of concerts in Shanghai last November. (IMDB)



Britney Spears

Radcliffe Passes Church, Approaches Prince's Wealth

Harry Potter star Daniel Radcliffe has replaced singer Charlotte Church as Britain's second richest teenager and the actor is predicted to soon become the richest. Currently Prince Harry is the country's richest teenager, but Radcliffe is predicted to eclipse the royal's reported \$25 million fortune as his salary for the series of Potter films rises with each installment. A movie insider says, "The project would lose too much credibility if they changed any of the lead actors now, so in effect Dan can name his price. He'll be the richest teenager in the UK and one of the richest in the world by the time its all done." (IMDB)



Daniel Radcliffe

world stage," said the Hong Kong-born actor. Chan modeled his new clothing, which bears a Chinese dragon logo and the English word "Jackie," at an informal fashion show in Beijing. (AFP)

Sarah Brightman Keen to Try Her Hand at Composing



Sarah Brightman

Sarah Brightman tasted teenage fame as a disco diva and then shot to international stardom in *Phantom of the Opera*. Now, after selling 15 million albums around the world and carving out a career as a solo artist, the British singer has one big ambition she would love to fulfill - as a composer. "I need to do it. I have many sounds in my head and musical lines I want to play with," she told Reuters in an interview before embarking on a concert tour of Europe and Asia. "It's all in here," said Brightman, 43, tapping her head. "I love symphonic pieces. I would love to play with different sounds," she said. "I would like to compose but I need to go back to school to learn orchestration. That takes time."

(Reuters)



Steven Soderbergh

Soderbergh Takes Over 'Che' Movie

Oscar-winner Benicio Del Toro and director Steven Soderbergh have teamed up again on a new biopic about Cuban revolutionary Che Guevara. The moviemaker will replace Terrence Malick as the project's director. Malick, who co-wrote the script for *Che* with Del Toro, quit the project to work with Colin Farrell on *The New World*. Soderbergh is now negotiating with Del Toro's supporting cast, which includes Ryan Gosling, Benjamin Bratt and Javier Bardem, to keep them involved in the film, which will start shooting this summer. (IMDB)

Edited by Yu Shanshan

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Olive branch necklace in three colors of gold at Kavenna Capo (79,318 yuan)

Photos by Sun Haitao

Kavenna Capo

By Lu Pinrou

While some of the other jewelry stores in Tongli Studio specialize in minimalist, modern pieces, Kavenna Capo confidently sticks with classic, classy styles. Most of the items are the store's own designs and all are of guaranteed quality.

One eye-catching piece is a necklace of 18-karat white, yellow and rose gold shaped like an olive branch. The leaves are adorned with a total of 6.4 carats of diamonds. Every ring in the chain was crafted and joined by hand, part of the reason it is priced at 79,318 yuan.

Diamonds also highlight a necklace, bracelet and earrings set in which all the pieces are made of small rose gold crosses. Sold separately, the earrings fetch 20,600 yuan, the bracelet 65,798 and the necklace 57,372.

Traditional Chinese culture gets a jewel touch-up in a pair of 21,950-yuan, diamond-encrusted earrings shaped like the ancient symbol of the ying-yang. A more modern item is a white gold ring crafted in the image of the store's logo, priced at 2,188 yuan.

Other distinctive items are made of rare black gold, but they tend to sell out very quickly. In such cases, the store can order custom-made jewelry pieces from Hong Kong and have them delivered within seven to 10 days.

Where: No. 205-206 Tongli Studio, just off Sanlitun Lu (North Bar Street) **Open:** 11 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6417 2291

Play Time

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Using its small size as an advantage, Play Time succeeds in standing out as more of a boutique toy store than the sprawling plaything warehouses more common in the capital. The store feels like a fun, tiny cartoon world filled to the gills with unusual and valuable toys.

The shelves are stacked not only with the kinds of toys beloved by kids, but also the kind that tempt adult customers. Some items, such as the model trains, cars and bicycles, have collective value beyond their playful appeal, such as an authentic replica of a 1950s bicycle.

Other collectibles are tied into the worlds of comic books and movies, as all kinds of famed figures from Hollywood blockbusters can be found in miniature form. Film buffs can get their hands on a screaming figure of the Hulk shaking a fist, a 70-centimeter version of ET in a t-shirt or even the king himself, Aragon of the Lord of the Rings, astride his horse.

Music fans may get a kick out of a scaled-down version of boy band N' Sync or movable action figures of glam metal gods Kiss. According to the store assistant, all the figures were collected abroad by Play Time's owner, Han Yue, a big toy buff himself.

The goofier toys on hand are more likely to please the young ones. Check out a mummy figurine that has some surprises under wraps. Press on his left hand and the risen corpse starts dancing to the tune of Michael Jackson's megahit *Thriller*. Shifting rhythmically from his left foot to right, he twists at the waist and stretches his neck. Why a dancing mummy? Why not?

Where: No. 209 Tongli Studio **Tel:** 6417 3988 ext. 209



Zoinks! Shaggy toy at Play Time (80 yuan)



Exotic lights at S&T Thai Store

S&T Thai Store

By Jiang Yongzhu

A little oasis of Southeastern Asian culture in the fashionable Tongli Studio, the S&T store is a specialist in arts and crafts from Thailand, including lamps, curtains, candleholders and jewelry.

"Thai crafts make use of natural materials and light hues. Because they are made by hand and with great skill, they are also very delicate," said store owner Hong Mei, who lived in Thailand for several years.

The stock of lamps, most made of hemp, paper or seashells, are beautiful unions of the natural and the man-made. A 1.5-meter tall lamp (960 yuan) stands out for several reasons. It's flower bud-shaped shade is made of hemp laced with strips of bamboo leaves and gives off a warm and soothing light. The shades are available in five colors, natural, yellow, orange, blue and purple.

Another impressive lamp features a shade made of thin, squarish shards of seashell (660 yuan). "The shells are carefully chosen to make sure they are both thin and durable," said Hong. The shells give off a diaphanous glow when the lamp is lit, making it both functional and an attractive conversation piece.

The store's selection of jewelry runs along similar lines, the earrings, bracelets and necklaces notable for their delicacy and bright beauty. One series of bracelets features pure silver bases highlighted with inlaid stones, carnelian, turquoise or amber, in a range of sizes and shapes. The elegantly simple pieces are priced from 190 yuan to 480 yuan.

Where: No. 305 Tongli Studio

Open: 11 am - 9 pm

Tel: 13661369279

shopping, the red brick walls inspire shoppers to delve inside and check out the nearly 20 stores, most on the second and third floors, that offer clothing, jewelry, handicrafts and home decorations, the majority of which is imported, handmade or otherwise unavailable anywhere else in the capital.

Runtu Culture

By Lisa Lee

Earth is for sale in the Runtu Culture store, the name of which means nourished soil in Chinese.

The shelves are not stocked with dirt, but with clay sculptures and other pottery pieces. Half of them depict the simple rustic life of the Chinese countryside and the other half portray beautiful women.

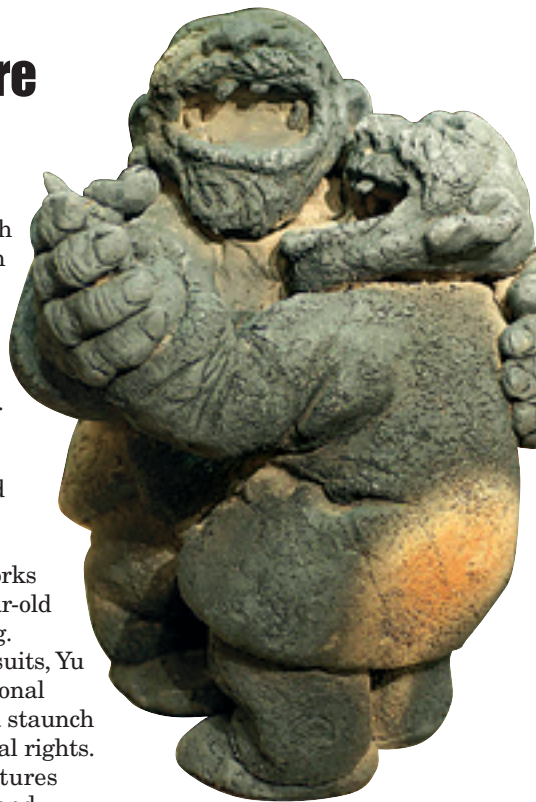
The country-style works were sculpted by 60-year-old folk artist Yu Qingcheng. Besides his artistic pursuits, Yu is a member of the National People's Congress and a staunch defender of farmers' legal rights.

Prices for Yu's sculptures vary according to size and whether pieces are originals or copies. The general range is 500 yuan to 6,000 yuan a piece.

One of his more evocative pieces is a sculpture of a mother breastfeeding her two children, one named Yangtze River and the other Yellow River. The piece is a barely-concealed metaphor for the importance of those two waterways to Chinese civilization and an ode to the beauty of maternal love.

The work *Two Blooming Flowers* depicts an old man with a face full of wrinkles putting a flower into his wife's hair, a fun and moving picture of enduring love.

A similarly elderly couple is shown dancing near a mill stone in another lively piece. Dubbed *Making Up a Missed Lesson*, the work is intended to show the forces of change at work in peasants' lives, as



Clay sculpture Making Up a Missed Lesson at Runtu Culture (8,000 yuan)

the introduction of new ways of thinking and living have led rural people to be more open-minded and flexible. The work is one of the most expensive in the collection, tagged at 8,000 yuan.

The other series of works were sculpted by Zheng Yukui, an established artist and graduate of one Beijing's more prestigious fine arts schools. His pieces have an exaggerated, unrestrained feel and portray country boys and pretty women in a range of poses and expresses both innocent and elegant. Prices range from 600 yuan to 1,500 yuan.

Where: No. 207 Tongli Studio

Open: 11 am - 9 pm

Tel: 13911088583

Other Stores in Tongli

Second floor

Free Life (No. 202): home decorations from Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries

Silver Counter (No. 208): Handmade silver jewelry of in-house design

Jade House (No. 210): Jade jewelry

Orchid Mansion (No. 212): gifts, home decorations, toys and teacups

Dripping Eaves Collection (No. 216): textile products (saris, sheets, cushions) from India and Nepal

Ya Bu Sang Ka (No. 218): clothes of the Jinuo minority people of Yunnan

Yi Fan Xing (No. 219): lacquer crafts

Thing of the Jing (No. 221): unique handmade silver jewelry

Casa Bella (No. 222): porcelain

Third floor

SPY (No. 303): Hong Kong brand clothes

St. Bukking Ham (No. 305): jewelry

Da Yuan Interior Design (No. 306): furniture, decorations and interior design service

India Impress (No. 310): Indian clothes, decorations and jewelry

Tong Fei (No. 318): African home decorations, including wooden sculptures

D&L Jewelry (No. 319): jewelry from China and abroad

Ming Yue Fang (No. 320): trinkets and decorations from Vietnam, lots of elegant chopsticks

Jenny's (No. 321): toys, bags, glazed jewelry and home decorations

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Performance

**Dynamic Yunnan
(Yunnan Yingxiang)**

Featuring traditional Yunnan dance performed by Yang Liping, famous for her charming performances in *The Soul of The Peacock* and *Moonlight*.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie **Admission:** 100-680 yuan **When:** April 13-16, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6506 5345

**The Artists from Tianshan Mountain**

The Opera Ensemble of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region presents a variety show called *Blessings of Tianshan Mountain*. The Uygur artists clad in colorful costumes of minority groups, will dance, sing and act.

Where: Nationality Cultural Palace Theatre, Xidan **When:** April 15-18, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-500 yuan **Tel:** 6602 2530

**The Best Tower in the World (Tianxia Diyi Lou)**

When the boss of a Beijing duck restaurant dies, his business flourishes in the capable hands of a businessman. The two sons of the former boss, both of whom lacked the ability to run the business, turn up again to claim their fortune. Performed by Beijing People's Art Theater, directed by Xia Chun and Gu Wei, and starring Tan Zhongrao, Lin Liankun, Lu Zhong and Han Sanxu.

Where: Capital Theatre, 22 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** April 9-25, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-280 yuan **Tel:** 6525 0996

Music

Dvorak Tribute

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Dvorak, a concert of the great composer's works will be held by the Beijing Symphony Orchestra, featuring Li Chuanyun, a promising violinist. Tan Lihua, artistic director of Beijing Symphony Orchestra, conducts.

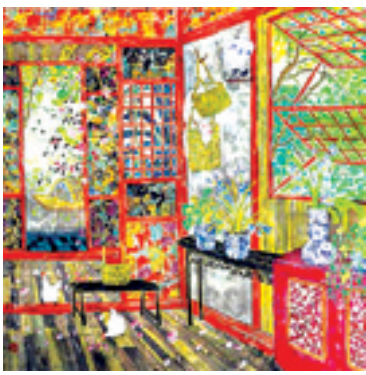
Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall, Zhongshan Park, Tian'anmen Square **When:** April 9, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 30-380 yuan **Tel:** 6559 8285

Exhibitions

**Feng Feng Solo Exhibition**

Feng Feng's oil paintings draw on ancient Chinese culture, such as Chinese seals and classical books. The works aim to blend traditional Chinese culture and abstract art.

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1E Enjoy Paradise, Huaweili, north of Beijing Curio City **When:** April 17-30, 9:30 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0458

**Tang Chenghua Solo Exhibition**

Tang Chenghua graduated from Fujian Normal University with a major in oil painting. He got a scholarship for graduate study in Japan in 1992 and got his masters degree in oil painting in 1995. The imagery he uses aims to invoke a strong sense of consciousness.

Where: Creation Gallery, north end of Ritan donglu **When:** April 10-18, 10 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

The Power of the Ordinary

An exhibition of works by Yue

Luping, an artist from Xi'an in Shaanxi Province. His influences include cave-dwellings. Yue will be living in a tent in the exhibition hall and displaying the works he finished in his cave studio.

Where: Long March Cultural Transmission Center, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu **When:** till April 18, 11 am - 6 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6438 7107

Tang Guo Photo Exhibition

Nanjing-born artist Tang Guo displays photos following a theme of water. Tang is a versatile artist: he uses non-traditional papers for painting, produces ink wash works on clothes and also indulges in photography and papermaking. The photos in the exhibition attempt to offer a new perspective on water, one of the most important elements in Chinese painting.

Where: Cultural Office of the Italian Embassy, 2 Sanlitun Dong'erjie **When:** till April 18, 9 am - 1 pm, 2-5 pm (except weekends) **Tel:** 6532 2187

Movies

**French Cinema Panorama**

France Cinema Panorama will present 10 of the latest films made by French filmmakers. The schedule is Martin Valente's *Amateurs* on April 9 (5:30 pm), Yann Samuelli's *Love Me if You Dare* on April 9 (8:30 pm), Jacques-Remy Girerd's *The Frog Prophecy* on April 10 (1 pm), Jean Becker's *Secret Gardens* on April 10 (3 pm), Louis-Pascal Couvelaire's *Michel Vaillant* on April 10 (5:30 pm), Marc Esposito's *French Men*

on April 10 (8 pm), Philippe Le Guay's *The Cost of Living* on April 11 (3 pm), Bruno Podalydes' *The Mystery of the Yellow Room* on April 11 (5:30 pm), *If I Were a Rich Man*, by Michel Munzet and Gérard Bitton on April 11 (8 pm). In French, with Chinese subtitles.

Where: the Hall of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, 23 Taipingqiao Dajie, Xicheng **When:** April 9-11 **Admission:** 25 yuan **Tel:** 800 810 3721

La Vida Conyugal

Directed by Carlos Carrera, this is the story of a devoted couple who get married fully intending to spend the rest of their days together. But as the years go by, the couple face the usual problems of marriage. Jacqueline, the wife, decides to resolve her problems by killing her husband. In Spanish with English subtitles

Where: Cultural Office of the Mexican Embassy, No.5 wujie Sanlitun **When:** April 14, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6532 2244

**Burning in the Wind**

Directed by Silvio Soldini, starring Ivan Franek. Immigrant worker Tobias Horvath lives a seemingly mundane life, his main hope being to find Line, an ideal woman lost in his imagination. In French with Italian subtitles

Where: Cultural Office of the Italian Embassy, 2 Dongerjie, Sanlitun **When:** April 15, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

Green Tea (Lu Cha)

Directed by Zhang Yuan, starring Jiang Wen, Zhao Wei, Zhang Yuan. This is a delightful love story with a very mysterious odor. Wu Fang, a highly desirable single career woman, orders a cup of green tea in order to read the leaves that she believes will predict her fate during each first date. In Chinese with English subtitles.

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** April 9-10, 8 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13901134745

**The Pianist**

Directed by Roman Polanski. Starring Adrien Brody, Thomas Kretschmann and Emilia Fox. Based on the story of brilliant Polish pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman and winner of the Best Picture Award at the 75th Annual Academy Awards. A Jewish pianist struggles to survive the destruction of Warsaw during WWII.

Where: ChaoyangTheatre, 36 Dongsanhuan Beilu **When:** April 9-15 **Tel:** 6507 1818

Apocalypse Now and Riverworld

Apocalypse Now, directed by Francis Ford Coppola and starring Marlon Brando, focuses on the Vietnam war and was one of the most controversial movies of its day. To be shown on April 12. *Riverworld*, a rendition of the popular Philip Jose Farmer novels, will be shown on April 13.

Where: B2M, Dongheyan Xiaoqu, Near Yonghegong **When:** 8 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6426 1091

Sports

Silver Pagoda Loop

This is a loop walk, starting from a village which is home to a 300 year-old temple. The houses in the village are mostly built of granite. The trail loops around a mountain, past a local shrine. It passes through a valley known as "the valley of mercy" and climbs up to the peak of the mountain, offering panoramic views.

Where: Changping county, north of Beijing **When:** April 11, 8:30 am at the Lido Hotel outside Starbucks Cafe **Admission:** 150 yuan for adults and 100 yuan for Children **Tel:** 1391002 5516.

Jams

Lucky Bands

Bands including Nao Zuo, Jayside, Last Chance of Youth, Believers, Subs and Another Idea appear on April 9. Thin Man (*Shouren*) will be on stage on April 10.

Where: Get Lucky, No.1 Dongfang Qicaida Shijie, Laitai Jie, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 8448 3335

Handsome Skyscraper and Jazzy Wolf

Handsome Black and Skyscraper (*Motiandalou*) play straight-up, hard-driving rock and roll tomorrow night. Wang Cheng and his band play jazz on April 14.

Where: Loup Chante, Chengfu Lu, Shiweiyang **Admission:** free **When:** 9pm **Tel:** 6276 7355

Language exchange

A Chinese boy, a postgraduate, wants to have a language exchange with a native English or German speaker. His English is fluent.

Tel: 13811008831

Email:

bill.li@cssoftsolution.com

TV and Radio Highlights**CCTV-9****MONDAY - FRIDAY**

Around China	6:30 am
Documentary	8:30 am
Nature and Science or	
Chinese Civilization	11:30 am
Cultural Express	4:30 pm
Shanghai Today or	
Chinese Civilization	6 pm
Sports Scene or	
Learning Chinese	11 pm
Center Stage	7:30 am
Dialogue	4:30 am

SATURDAY

Travelogue	9:30 am
World Insight	11:30 am

SUNDAY

China This Week	9:30 am
Business Guide	11:00 am
China Today	11:30 am

China Radio International**91.5 FM****MONDAY - FRIDAY**

Easy FM Afternoon	2-7 pm
Fun in Beijing	5:05-5:30 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm

SATURDAY

Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Euro Hits 40	12:05-1 pm
Music Sans Frontiers	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm

SUNDAY

Music Memories	8:05-11 am
Jazz Beat	6:05-8 pm
Joy FM	9:05-11 pm

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By Guo Yuandan



Photos by Tian Xiaotong

Taoranting, Park of Ecstasy

By Shida Zhu

The site of today's Taoranting Park was the eastern urban district of the capital, Dadu, of the Jin Dynasty and imperial brick kilns during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

During the Yuan, Ming and Qing, court officials and rich men built their private gardens there. Jiang Zao, the Minister of Industry during the reign of Emperor Kangxi, who was in charge of the brick kilns, built three houses at the Zibei Temple (the Temple of Mercy, 慈悲庵) south of the kiln. He named the compound "Taoranting" (the Garden of Ecstasy, 陶然亭) after famous Tang poet Bai Juyi's poem:

*When the chrysanthemums turn yellow and wine is made,
Lo! my dear friend,
Let's drink to our heart's content and be drunken away*

In ecstasy.

The site that covered the Black Dragon Pond (黑龙潭) the east, Dragon Spring Temple (龙泉寺) in the west, Nanheng Street (南横街) in the north and the city wall in the south later became an attraction for tourists from far away and those scholars who came to the nation's capital for imperial civil examinations.

Most famous at the site was the Plum Garden (刺梅园) northeast of the Garden of Ecstasy and northwest of the Black Dragon Pond. Scholars and literati of the Ming and Qing dynasties often came there to drink wine and compose poems. Cao Zhenji, a poet of the Qing, once sang of the garden:

*When the plum has not yet come to bloom,
I invite friends to come;
The leaves falling like in dreams,
We toast under the pine tree.*

Northwest of the Garden of Ecstasy was an ancient garden, the Garden of the Fengs (封氏园), built in 1122, the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Tianfu of the Jin Dynasty and declined in 1722, the 61st year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi. Though it decayed, some of the ancient pine trees still stood, attracting many a poet.

At Nanbanjie Hutong (南半截胡同) on Nanheng Street was the Garden of Ease (怡园), locally dubbed the Seven-



Cloud-painted tower



Temple of Mercy

Building Garden (七间楼), the private garden of Yan Song, a high-ranking official of the Ming Dynasty and later Wang Xi, a great court official and scholar of the Qing. The garden covered the most part of the street and transcended over the southern, western and northern parts of the city.

Most outstanding of the garden's sights was the grotesque formation of Taihu Lake rocks designed by Zhang Ran of Huating. Zhang Ran designed the rock formations at such famous imperial gardens as the Yingtai at Zhongnanhai, Changchunyuan (later the Summer Palace) and Yuquan Hill.

Northwest of the Garden of Ecstasy and southeast of the Dragon Spring Temple was an ancient temple called Longzhuahuai (龙爪槐) noted for two Dragon Claw Chinese scholar trees.

The current earthen mound on the

north of today's Taoranting Park was the site of an imperial kiln called Black Kiln. It made ordinary bricks and tiles for the building of imperial palaces during the reign of Emperor Yongle of the Ming. As feudal emperors who had superstitious ideas about fengshui forbade excavation of soil for brick making in the imperial city proper, the kiln had to get its soil from the sandy hill.

In the 281 years from the 18th year of the reign of Emperor Yongle of the Ming to the 33rd year of the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing, the hill had almost been leveled. Officials in charge of the imperial kiln built a temple there for the worship of the God of Fire.

Today's Taoranting Park still retains many ancient traces. On the gourd-shaped islet in between the Eastern and the Western lakes stands the Temple of Mercy, built on a raised rocky platform during the Yuan Dynasty. The temple is a standard traditional quadrangle (sihe) courtyard with pavilions on the east, south, west and north. The western and northern pavilions each had three rooms. The western pavilion was the original Taoranting.

During the reign of Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty, the Black Kiln was still in operation and there were two supervisors, one Manchurian and one Han. The Han supervisor was Ji-ang Zao, a native of Hanyang, Hubei province, a Minister of Industry of the court. He was a poet and calligraphic master.

At the gate of the temple was a calligraphic work in gold of Taoran by Ji-ang Zao and on the temple wall were inset with a rock carving, "Ode to Taoranting" that sang in the last two verses:

*Sorry that I'm not a painter
To draw a picture of listening to the cascading spring
In deep Autumn night.*

The temple wall was also inset with the calligraphic work "Urban Forest" by Wang Yushu.

Southwest of the gourd-shaped islet was a two-storied pavilion, respectively named Cloud-painted Tower and Pure-sound Chamber (云绘楼, 清音阁). The pavilion, built during the reign of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing, was origi-

nally at the eastern bank of Nanhai, the southern lake. Zhou Enlai suggested moving the pavilion out of Nanhai to Taoranting Park in 1954.

On January 18, 1920, Mao Zedong met with his revolutionary friend Deng Zhongxia, a member of the Fu Society, at the Temple of Mercy. In the late Qing Dynasty, Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao and Tan Sitong, scholars who attempted to wring a reform copying the West within the framework of the feudal rule, often gathered here for secret meetings.

Members of the Young Chinese Society, an organization under the leadership of Li Dazhao, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party, had meetings here in absolute secrecy. On August 20, 1920, representatives of the Tianjin Society of Awakening, led by Zhou Enlai, and the Young Chinese Society of Beijing had a joint conference to consolidate their solidarity.

According to legend, on the mound in the northeast of Taoranting there was a grave of a "fragrant beauty" of the Ming. The beauty was a famous courtesan who was married to a man called Yinchuan at the age of 16. Yinchuan's first wife, a hot-tempered woman, bullied her incessantly and she died of melancholy. Some feet away there was another grave of parrots.

The legend says that a Cantonese official who was recalled by the emperor to Beijing brought with him a white-feathered parrot that could recite some Tang poems. When the parrot died, the sad Cantonese official buried the bird here. As a matter of fact, the graves only contained the ink-brushes and manuscripts of poetry buried by one man who had repeatedly failed the official civil examinations.

Now, there is a grave of Gao Junyu, a labor movement agitator during the period of the Northern Warlords, who died at the age of 30. The grave stone is inscribed with a poem by his girlfriend Shi Pingmei:

*I'm the sword,
I'm the fire,
I will live like a lightning,
Die like a fleeting star.*

The couple were buried in the grave when Shi Pingmei died.



Wutai Pagoda

Museum of Stone Carvings

By Peng Xiaojiang

Beijing Art Museum of Stone Carvings is a treasure house of stone carving culture. The museum stands on the site of Wutai (Five Pagoda) Temple, in Beijing's west.

Originally known as Zhenjue Temple, Wutai Temple was built during the reign of Emperor Yongle (1403-1424) of the Ming Dynasty, but destroyed by fire at the end of the Qing Dynasty. Only the Vajrasana, or pedestal, built in 1473, and five pagodas standing on it survived.

They were on the first list of ancient monuments to be accorded special protection status on a national level in 1961.

Wutaisi is the oldest of only a handful of this particular type of Buddhist pagoda (five pagodas on a pedestal) in existence in China.

The pedestal is decorated with exquisite sankrit engravings and images of Bodhisattvas, and other auspicious figures. Forty-four steps spiral up to the glazed-tile pavilion on the top the pedestal.

The museum also boasts an abundant collection of precious stone carvings.

On the east side of the pedestal, various types of stone engravings are exhibited, including stone tablets recording the organizational systems and other activities of temples and monasteries, the tablets of Jesuits, tablets from ancestral halls and cemeteries, records of guild halls, and also tablets recording such activities as building bridge, mending roads, regulating rivers and setting up schools.

The west side of the platform is dedicated to stone tablets from mausoleums. One of the most elaborate is a miniature mortuary shrine from the Qing Dynasty, which is composed of over thirty stone carvings.

The museum has also set up an exhibition showing the stone carving culture in the Beijing region in a newly built exhibition hall.

Hall One shows the origin of the culture of stone carving with epitaph stones, model calligraphy on stone and some traditional and religious stone engravings.

Hall Two contains different kinds of stone fine arts. The most precious of these is the columns from the avenue leading to the coffin chamber of the tomb of Qin Jun, a noble of the Eastern Han Dynasty, which were unearthed in Laoshan, Shijingshan District.

It is the earliest and best preserved example of stone carving from a mausoleum discovered in Beijing.

Address: Baishiqiao, Xizhimenwai, Haidian District
Open: 9 am - 4 pm, closed Mondays

Admission: adults 15 yuan, students 8 yuan



Northern Wei Dynasty stone statue
Photos by Peng Xiaojiang